

## Prologue

She stared down at the photo album with a soft smile, flipping threw the pages laughing quietly at some of the pictures and shaking her head at others. It was hard to believe that it had only been a little over two years ago that these pictures had been taken.

God she missed them..... She missed him.

She flipped to the next page and froze staring down at the picture of their wedding day. She could almost hear the joyous laughter with the occasional happy sobs that had surrounded that day.

Albus Dumbledore had played the father role and had given her away. Minerva McGonagall had sat weeping in her family section and James had stood waiting up front with Sirius, Remus and Peter as his best men. He had stood there smiling and never breaking eye contact with her as she walked towards him.

When the minister had gotten to the 'do you James Potter take Lily Evans' part, Sirius joined Minerva in the crying making everyone laugh. Although he claimed later he had just gotten something in his eye; then even later when no one would stop calling him our emotional mutt he had muttered that at least he had cried manly and that it wasn't every day that his best friend who was like his brother got married. Ah yes the things a little fire whisky will have you muttering.

Snapping back to reality Lily turned the page in the photo album and burst out in laughter causing the people around her to look at her strangely.

The picture was from at the wedding reception. To be exact it was the after picture of the cake cutting. Like most couples they had cut the cake and had gone to feed each other. Surprisingly enough it wasn't James that had smeared cake on to her face but her doing it to him. He had looked so startled as everyone laughed at him, then he had gotten that look in his eyes that she had gotten to know so well from years of being pranked by him. Reacting with instinct she had ducked just in time so instead of smearing her face with cake he got Sirius.

This of course led from one thing to another and a full out food fight had started.

It had been the perfect ending to a Marauders wedding.

Smiling fondly at her food covered friends she finally closed the book and looked out the window of the air plane.

Placing a hand on her protruding belly to comfort herself, she wondered again if she was doing the right thing.

God how had their happy lives turned to this?

It had been one of the happiest days of her life. She had been feeling extremely ill for the several days and after hiding it from James she finally decided to go to a doctor. She had decided to go to a muggle doctor so that James wouldn't hear about it and have another thing to worry about.

With Voldemort on the rise the last thing James needed was to know that she wasn't feeling good.

She had been shocked when the doctor had told her that she was pregnant, she hadn't even thought of the possibility. After the shock had worn off she had been down right giddy, jumping of the exam table she had given the doctor a huge hug laughing. The doctor had laughed as well happy that the news wasn't devastating.

After the doctor had given her specific instructions as well as an approximate arrival date Lily had returned home as quickly as possible without apparating in case that would damage the baby.

Arriving home she was disappointed to find her husband not there but rather a note saying he had gone to Hogwarts to talk to Dumbledore. After thinking for a moment she had decided that she would need to talk to Poppy anyways and flooed herself to Hogsmead and made a brisk walk to Hogwarts.

She spotted Severus Snape coming out of Hogwarts and immediately greeted him with a grin and a cheerful hello not carrying whatsoever

what he would say to her. Much to her surprise he had stopped dead in his track and stared at her paling by the moment.

Shaking out of his stupor he had whispered almost in horror 'You're pregnant.' This of course had freaked her out a little wondering what she had done to give herself away and had even gone as far as asking how he could tell.

He had ignored her for a minute looking at her with a mixture of horror, shock and thoughtfulness before going up to her and demanding that they had to talk now.

It had been a conversation that had changed her life.

'When are you due Lily?'

'Around the end of August'

'But it could be earlier couldn't it' she had nodded slightly with this wondering what was the matter with him. Severus being Severus did not beat around the bush for long.

'Lily, there was prophesy made, a child born as the seventh month dies will be Voldemorts greatest enemy. The only one who can defeat him. There is more to the prophesy and everyone agrees that it fits you and Potter almost to a tee other then the fact that you aren't pregnant. So I'm going to take it that no one knows yet.'

She had felt like all the blood was leaving her body and she was left with that lovely feeling of ice cold dread.

'Lily you have two options, stay and let Voldemort come after you again and again until he finally kills you; because he is going to want to kill you and your child. Or you can fake your own death and go into hiding until your child is old enough to protect itself. If you choose that latter come to me and I will help you, but you have to decide quickly before anyone knows about the child.'

With that said Severus had turned around and walked away before she could ask any questions. Her mind was reeling, her baby could

be in danger; but could she really run away? She was after all a Gryffindor and suppose to brave, but then wouldn't it be considered brave to give up everything she knew for the unknown.

She had returned home after her meeting with Severus to think. Her mind running through options. If she stayed, Voldemort would come after them and her child would be in constant danger. If she left the best place to hide would be with muggles, which she would have no problem blending in with since she had once been one; but James wouldn't do so well having never spent more than a weekend in their company. He was also one of the best Aurors the ministry had at the moment so it would be wrong for him to just up and leave; not to mention he loved his job.

With all the thoughts running through her head she hadn't even heard her husband come home. He had snuck up behind her scarring the crap out of her before giving her a quick kiss and heading to the kitchen for something to eat.

That night she had laid in his arms with one hand pressed up against her stomach and the other to his heart. She watched him as he slept and made her final decision.

She was going to have to leave.

She couldn't stay and place all their lives in danger, but at the same time she couldn't ask James to come since she just didn't think he could adjust to living like a muggle. It wouldn't be fair for her to ask since there would be no way he would let her go by herself, but he would be unhappy unable to live the way he was used to and unable to do the job he loved.

She felt tears streak down her face as she burrowed closer to her husband. Her decision had been made.

The happiest day of her life had quickly turned into one of the worst.

"This is your captain speaking we will be landing in a few moments...." The pilot's voice brought her back to reality. Drying her

tears that had been falling down her cheeks as she had thought about that day she prepared herself for the landing.

It had taken her a month to prepare for her 'death'. She had scrounged up as much money as she could without looking suspicious. She had spent as much time as she could with her friends and husband to the point where most of them had started to think she was slightly crazy.

When Alice had told the gang that she was pregnant Lily had almost broken down in tears. Because although Alice looked happy her eyes as well as Frank's looked worried. James had told her about the prophecy that night when she had asked him why they looked so worried. Luckily when she paled he thought she was just worried for their friends; which of course she was, but she was also worried about their own child.

Severus had taken care of the more important matters such as planning the death which ended up being a muggle car accident. He planned to have the car go off a cliff making it difficult to find her body. What they would find was her broken wand in an area nearby that would look like a wizard battle had just gone on with her blood spilt everywhere. This was done by him taking some of her blood every few days in order to have enough.

He had taken it upon himself to get her an illegal wand which would be untraceable for emergency use only. He had also gotten his hands on fake muggle id.

When the time came the plan worked perfectly. Two weeks after her 'death' the call was off for finding her alive. It was official Lily Potter was dead with many speculations with how she died.

Yes Lily Potter had died and in her place was Lillian McRae, a widower.

"Are you alright Miss?" Startled she looked up at the flight attendant who was smiling kindly down at her. Looking around she noticed that she was one of the last on the plane.

“Yes I’m fine. It just gets a little hard to maneuver when you’re carrying a passenger” she answers and gestures to her stomach making the lady grin.

“I know what you mean, I’ve had three and I swear each time it gets more difficult to get around” Sharing a smile the flight attendant helps her up and together they make there way towards the exit.

After getting her luggage she makes her way to a taxi to take her to a hotel.

Lying on the bed she stares at the ceiling wishing desperately for James’ comforting arms around her.

“Well this is it baby, it’s just you me from here on out” She jolts up right when she feels something different. Placing her hand on her stomach she feels herself give her first real grin sincethe talk with Severus. Her baby for the first time is kicking.

They were going to be alright.

## Chapter 1

July 29th 1980

The order of the Phoenix gathered in the Great hall of Hogwarts awaiting the birth of the child who would one day face Voldemort. For Eighteen hours Alice Longbottom had been in labor. For eighteen hours the order had been a nervous wreck waiting to hear that their friend was safe and that the child was healthy.

The last six months had not been an easy six months for the order. It had been discovered by one of Dumbledors spy's that Volemort had learned of the prophesy and knew that the Longbottoms were expecting. It hadn't taken Voldemort long to put two and two together and begin to try and kill the Longbottoms before the child could become a threat to him.

As soon as the order discovered that Voldemort knew the prophesy, Alice and Frank were rushed into hiding with only a few select people aware of their location which would change every few weeks.

One of the few people who had known where the Longbottoms were at all times was James Potter.

James had been once again in the field where his wife had died. He had been going there every day trying to figure out just what had happened. It didn't make sense at all to him, no matter how many times he looked at it he couldn't except that his Lily was gone. It didn't help that every night he dreamt of her. He would see her in strange places that looked almost muggle. The strangest things about these dreams was that he wasn't seeing Lily the way he remebered her but pregnant.

When he had told Remus and Sirius about his dreams they had tried to tell him that he was just dreaming of what he wished he could have had. Of course he had always wanted to have children with Lily but that didn't explain why he would dream of things he had never seen before like that large flying object he had seen and that after doing some research the next day he discovered was called an airplane. How would he know what one of those looked like? And the

occasional time Lily would see him, she would smile sadly saying that she was dreaming and she would tell him how much she missed him and how frightened she was. He had stopped telling his friends about the dreams when they started to look at him as if he was going crazy.

He wasn't going crazy. Lily had to still be alive. There were just too many unanswerable questions.

The first problem that he always came to was why had Lily gone to see her sister? They had not gotten along since Lily had been accepted into Hogwarts. And why would she drive? Why not just apparate or floo? And why was her wand here with so few spells having been cast? And the spells that were cast weren't spells that Lily normally used. Hell it was almost like someone had told her what to do and what to cast. The battle ground was just too uncontaminated with the spells being cast right after another like a school duel. In real battles spells were cast several at a time and quickly with attackers not really caring if they hit the target as long as they kept the target off balance. So battle grounds would normally have several areas of destruction where the stray spells hit; but that wasn't the case here.

No matter how many times he tried to explain his theories to his friends they would tell him that there was no way Lily could have survived that much blood loss; but he just couldn't believe she was gone.

It was his wedding ring that really gave him hope that she was still out there. He had gotten the rings enchanted so that he would be able to tell if Lily ever needed him since she was for the most part too stubborn to ask for help. And his ring was still sending him the message that she was fine. Frightened but fine.

He had been looking down at his wedding ring frowning when Albus had showed up beside him asking for his help to keep the Longbottoms safe. He knew that Albus had an ulterior motive for asking him this. He knew that his friends were worried about his sanity and hoped that if he threw himself into work he might start to heal. And that was the reason that he had accepted Albus' offer, so his friends could stop worrying about him.



“Albus! Poppy needs you now! He’s using some kind of spell to make Alice miscarriage!” Poppy’s young apprentice screamed as she raced into the Great Hall breaking his train of thought.

Albus jumped from his seat and ran surprisingly fast for someone his age out of the Hall towards the hospital wing. The order members looked at each other worriedly wondering what Voldemort had done now.

It wasn’t unexpected news but it was still unwanted news. This was the reason they were at Hogwarts instead of at St Mungos. Hogwarts had better wards around it then anywhere else just incase Voldemort decided to make one last attempt to attack the Longbottoms before the child could be born. And with Alice in labor this was definitely the time they were most vulnerable.

It wouldn’t have been Voldemorts first attempt to get to Alice before she could even give birth. He and Sirius had had more encounters with Death Eaters then they had ever had before. Every time they moved the Longbottoms to a new safe house Voldemort would find out and send his troops out again. After the third time this happened the order knew for sure that there was a spy in their midst but the big question was still who.

Since both Sirius and James had been at all three of the safe houses they had immediately been suspected. After both agreeing they had had there arms checked and questioned under Veritaserum before they had been allowed to go back to duty. But even after taking more caution they had still had more near misses then should have been possible.

There was an unbearable silence for the next half hour as the order members looked around nervously. He watched as some of the members looked at the clock, others at the door, some stared at their robes as they played with the material. He watched their faces trying to see into their minds to find who was betraying them.

Then through the unbearable silence came a rather faint cry of a baby which had the worried expressions on every ones faces melt

away and be replaced with smiles. The sound of running could be heard again and the members turned to the door to once again see the young medwitch grinning before shouting "It's a boy" with that said a loud cheer rang through the room.

Glancing over at Sirius he saw his friend grin and call the house elves for champaign. Sirius then got on to the table and lifted his glass in the air yelling out a toast causing everyone to raise their glasses now in front of them. He couldn't help but grin as he watched Remus try to drag Sirius off of the table while Sirius began to make a fool out of himself. Looking around his eyes landed on Peter who was standing in the corner smirking. As if sensing his friend looking at him Peter turned towards him and grinned raising his glass before looking back at Sirius and his antics.

James frowned slightly wondering why Peter suddenly looked so different from his school chum but his thoughts were interrupted by a loud voice he knew so well.

"Prongsie!" Shaking his head James made his way over to his now completely intoxicated friend to help Remus get him off the table before he hurt himself. Snickering they finally managed to pull Sirius off the table.

He looked over at Remus and they both rolled their eyes thinking the same thing. He would never understand Padfoot. The man could drink butterbeer and firewhiskey like it was water, hell he could drink them all under the table and that was saying something with Remus' werewolf abilities; but give the guy one cup of wine or champaign and he was tanked.

Glancing once more over at Peter he decided to put his worries away like Sirius had. Grabbing his glass he gulped his drink. He would forget for now about the trader in their midst. He would not think of what came next with the Longbottoms. He would not even think of Lily. Tonight was a night of celebration.

Round one had gone to the wizard world's savior; he had managed to stay alive long enough to be born.

## Chapter 2

July 31st 1980

"Your doing great Lily just keep breathing" Lily let out another scream as another labor pain ran through her body. Once the pain receded she looked at her mid wife who smiled at her.

"How do women go through this more then once? I mean how can they even think of having another child after going through this pain?" She groaned out.

"I had the same questions when I had my Samantha. I figure babies are like magic; they cast a spell on you the minute you look at them so you'll forget all about the pain." This caused Lily to smile which quickly changed to a scream as another contraction came upon her.

"Okay Lily you're going to have to start pushing soon but not yet." She nodded at this and closed her eyes trying to mentally prepare herself.

She had met the mid wife two months ago while having breakfast at a diner near her new house. She had been sitting by herself trying to figure out what her next step was when someone asked if they could join her. She had been shocked at first when the person had spoken fluent English since she had hidden herself in a small town in France where barely anyone new English. She had been having trouble communicating with people but had thought that this might be for the best so she wouldn't be able to accidentally let vital pieces of her past slip.

However the communication barrier also had a huge downside with the fact that she was lonely. So when she realized that the person in front of her also spoke English she had jumped at the chance to have a real conversation again and not one in broken English and her poor attempts in French.

It was one of the best moves Lily had ever made. The lady had turned out to be the answers to the new problems she faced.

The two of them had hit it off like they were old friends. Kimberly was not much older than Lily and had small child of her own. She had also recently moved to France when her husband had been transferred there.

After talking for a little over an hour they somehow got talking about what they did for a living. Lily had almost fallen out of the booth when Kim had told her that she was a midwife.

It had been a problem she had been worried about since her 'death'. Once she had discovered that she was pregnant she had begun to read as many books as she possibly could on witches pregnancies. She had been shocked to discover that with some wizard births it was quite normal for the babies to let off some magic as they were being born. She had no idea if this was a normal trait for Potter babies and had no way of finding out; however if it was and her child let off magic then that would send someone from the wizard world to cover it up which of course would lead to their discovery.

There was another problem with going to the hospital with the fact that there would then be a record of her child's birth and she wasn't sure if that would be a good idea.

All the books she had read stated that it was best to go to a midwife when it was time. This of course was not an option for her any longer.

This left her with two choices, she could either do this by herself which she truly did not want to do, or she could find a midwife. It was pure dumb luck that she had met Kim.

A little less than a month after meeting Kim she had decided to ask her to be the midwife; which Kim had accepted happily. With that problem solved all she had to worry about was finding a spell that would hide her child's magical signature which Hogwarts would use to add the name to the list of future students.

The spell had been surprisingly easy to find. It was a spell that wizards would use when going into hiding. After a lot of research on the spell she found nothing about it that could damage her child.

Her next problem that she had been planning to deal with was telling Kim a little about the wizarding world so she would know what to expect if the baby did decide to start doing magic. Lily had been trying to ease Kim into the notion of magic slowly so the shock would be less. Unfortunately her baby had decided to show a trait of its father with being impatient and was now a month early not giving her the chance to explain to Kim.

Another contraction hit Lily bringing her out of her thoughts very quickly. Between cursing James and the slight breaks of pain Lily noticed that every once in awhile the lights would flicker making her laugh mentally. It was just like a Potter to start showing off at birth.

"Okay Lily it's time" she heard Kim as another contraction hit her and she began to push.

As another contraction came she prepared herself the best she could for the pain she knew would now come. But blended in with the pain of the contraction was another pain ten times worse than anything she had ever felt before.

It was like hundreds of little knives were being stabbed into her abdomen followed with bursts of fire.

Her screams of pain blended in with Kim's cries of fears. Distantly Lily could hear someone chanting words that she just couldn't make out mixed with Kim's worried voice. Her blood turned cold when she realized that it was a spell. Her eyes widen in terror as she looked above her bed and saw the dark mark.

Her screams of pain turned to ones of pure terror. It had all been for nothing. Voldemort had found them.

Slowly the chant became louder and louder drowning out Kim's voice. As the voice got louder the pain got worst as well.

"James!" She screamed in desperation as she fought the darkness that was slowly surrounding her.

Just as she was sure she couldn't take another second of pain she heard a powerful roar which became mixed with a sound she never thought she would hear again; the phoenix's song. With this the pain began to lessen.

As the pain slowly left her she allowed herself to slip completely into the darkness with the sounds of a baby's cry mixing into the protective roar and the healing song.

### Chapter 3

Mitch Carlson nervously paced in his kitchen trying to calm his nerves. Looking once again at the clock he sighed and forced himself to sit down.

For the last three hours he had been gradually getting more and more agitated. His wife had called him at his office around noon to tell him that Lily had gone into labor and that he would have to pick up Samantha from the babysitter. He had done so at five o'clock sharp which had been five hours before.

Reaching for the phone he began to punch in Lily's number but stopped himself again. Berating himself mentally he stood up and resumed pacing. Kim would call if she needed help or if something had gone wrong. There was nothing to be worried about he reminded himself. But never the less he looked at the phone and scowled.

It wasn't the first time that Kim had been out late delivering a baby; hell it wouldn't be the last either, but something just didn't feel right.

Looking out the window he stared out into the blackness of the night not truly seeing anything too lost in his thoughts. A cry down the hall had him turn away from the window; with another quick glance at the clock he moved towards his daughter's room.

"Hush Sam, don't cry. Daddies got you" Mitch whispered softly when he entered Samantha's nursery. Moving toward her he picked up his six month old daughter and gently cradled her in his arms.

Her cries slowly turned to whimpers then to small sniffles. Looking down at his baby girl he grinned slightly. She definitely took after his side of the family. Her chocolate brown eyes were almost as black as her hair, and the true trait of anyone in his family showed on her mouth right now, a small scowl. Yes he thought she was definitely a Snape.

Not that she would ever know that she took after the Snape side of the family. No she would never know her paternal family, all she would ever know was that Grandfather and Grandmother Carlson had

died when her father had been a young man. She would never discover that the people she would think of as her grandparents were not even real.

It was better this way. She would have a chance to actually live. If her real grandparents ever discovered her existence she would be as good as dead.... they all would. Of course it would be completely his fault. He was the black sheep of the family after all, the one that no one had even acknowledged once he had turned eleven and had confirmed his family's worst fear. For he, Mitchel Thomas Snape, was a smudge on the family line; bringing great disgrace to his pure blood line that could be tracked for hundreds and hundreds of years; he was a squib.

Yes the very first squib to ever come out of the great Snape line. His parents had disowned him the moment he had not received his Hogwarts letter. Of course it had just been made official at that time. Growing up his life had been made utter hell by his relatives. While his younger brother who had been two years younger than him had begun to show signs of accidental magic he had still not. At first his family had just assumed that he was just late getting started; it was a well known myth around the pure blood families that the later the magic came the more powerful they would be. This had never been proven but it had also never been unconfirmed either. But as the years had gone by and he hadn't shown any signs of magic his family had begun to get desperate to make the magic show.

They had tried throwing him off of the roof of their ancestral home, tried tying rocks around his body and dumping him in lakes and they had tried everything else in between. Each attempt to make the magic surface got worse and worse. He had only survived because his brother Severus had used his accidental magic to save him.

By the time he had reached his eleventh year he knew that he was lucky to be alive. He had left the only home he had ever known to be placed in an orphanage so he could not poison his brother's mind. The only thing he had ever regretted about it was leaving his little brother who had for unknown reasons grown attached to him.



He still wondered why Severus had liked him so much. There were several possibilities, it could have just been the fact that he was the older brother to be looked up to, or it could have been that he had spent the most time with baby Severus much to his father's disapproval. Or it could have been that Severus had found him a very interesting specimen; a person without magic. Mitch would never know, however he would be forever grateful to his little brother for saving his life so many times.

Although Mitch had been an oddity of the Snape family his whole life they still had managed to screw him up quite severely. He had been told his whole life that pure bloods were the only acceptable people to converse with. That half bloods were all right however mudbloods, muggles and squibs were the lowest of things rating next to impurities such as werewolves, vampires and other such half human creatures.

It had taken years to get over believing he was lower than dirt. He had lost almost all contact with the wizarding world except from the occasional letter he would receive from Severus; which Mitch knew for a fact his parents had no clue about. In the later letters from his little brother he had read the confusion Severus had been feeling. He had of course never come out with 'Mitch I'm confused' but he always sounded so unsure about what was going on around him. Severus may have been able to trick his parents into believing he didn't have a conscious but Mitch could see the battle he was having with it.

It had been the summer that Severus had graduated, eight years since Mitch had seen him that he had gotten the surprise of a life time.

He had come home from a day of working at the factory, the glorious job of making automotive parts so he could afford school, when he saw a man standing in the kitchen. If he had been a true muggle he might of thought the man had the oddest clothes on; but wizard robes were something he was used to even if it had almost been a decade since he had actually seen any. The man had turned around and sneered at him however his eyes had held a slight uncertainty to them. They had stood there looking at each other for quite sometime before he had finally realized who was standing in his kitchen.

It had been the most awkward conversation he had ever had. They had both been stiff talking about banal things, such as the weather, family and what they were up too. After an hour of conversation Severus had stood up and began to pace, glancing at small things around the room stopping slightly to look at muggle pictures of his friends. Severus had come to a dead stop when he saw a picture of the two of them taken right before Mitch had been disowned. After staring at it for several minutes Severus had turned to his brother no longer with uncertainty in his eyes but with determination.

Severus had spat out how he had been given the order to kill Mitch before the summer was through to prove his loyalty to both his family and to the Dark Lord; failure to comply meant death too both of them, however he wouldn't be able to go through with it.

The two of them had sat in his apartment for hours debating how they could both come out of their predicament alive. Only to come to one conclusion that Mitch would have to die in order for Severus to live. They had taken days upon days researching how to fake someone's death. Where to get new identification for said dead person. After nearly two months of research and planning they had had to go through with there plan. Ready or not, which they hadn't been.

They had stolen a cadaver from a medical school and Severus had transfigured it to look like Mitch. Severus had then thrown several curses at it so there would be the spells on his wand in case anyone checked. All in all it had been a very pitiful job. When they had both gone their separate ways for the final time they had known that they were going to need a lot of luck for this to work. But luck had been on their sides, or at leasts it had been on Mitch's since he was still alive.

Mitch had wondered for years on how they could have faked his death better and he was fairly sure Severus had thought of it too, but he would never know.

A year after his death Mitch had met Kim. He had begun working at a small law firm and had slowly worked his way up. After dating Kim for only a few weeks he had known she was the one for him. Her innocence, naivety and altogether sweetness had helped him forget his past and see the good in most muggles; although this was still a

fairly big struggle. They had gotten married six months after they had met and soon after Kim got pregnant with Samantha.

Feeling a sharp tug of pain he looked down at Samantha who was still scowling while pulling his hair. Untangling her small fists from the hair she was playing with he looked once again to the clock and sighed when he saw it was eleven ten.

He had always known when something bad was about to happen. Muggles called it intuition, he thought of it as his own kind of magic. He had always been able to tell when his parents were about to try to force his magic out. He had been able to hide from their experiments more than once and had probably saved his life by listening to his gut.

Looking once again at his scowling daughter he spoke softly "You feel it to don't you. Something isn't right with your mommy. Something bad is coming." That being said he grabbed Sam's blanket and wrapped her in it, grabbed the car keys and headed for the door. Screw it, if Kim got pissed at him for being over protective he could deal with that but if something happened to her..... he just knew something awful was about to happen.

Driving slightly over the speed limit but not enough to bringing any unwanted attention he began to make his way to Lily McRae's house. With every minute that went by he felt his gut get tighter, feeling like he was almost out of time. Samantha who was usually a very fussy baby stayed dead quiet through the entire drive, her dark eyes always looking in the direction of Lily's house.

When he rounded the final corner and finally laid eyes on Lily's house he let out a sigh of relief. It was still standing and the lights were still on, everything appeared normal. Glancing down at the clock in the car he noted the time of eleven thirty-five. Looking back up at the house that he was now only a few houses away from he felt his blood go cold. The once black sky now had a green smoke appearing. He slammed the car brakes and quickly threw the car into park as Samantha let out a small whimper. A squib might not be able to do magic but unlike muggles they sure as hell saw it and having grown up around it they normally knew what was good magic and wasn't, and the magic appearing above Lily McRae's house sure wasn't good.

Swearing he glanced back at his little girl and made his choice. Throwing open the door of the car he dashed into the house screaming Kim's name. Praying to Merlin that she would be all right. He heard her panicked voice as well as a loud roar coming from the room to the right and dashed into a sight he had never imagined.

Taking in the scene as fast as he could he saw Lily lying on the bed looking like she had just fought the battle of her life and had barely won. She looked like she was just hanging on to life by a thread. His wife held a small child in her arms that already had his eyes open staring at a bird that was perched on the end of the bed looking right back at the baby as it sang. He gasped slightly at the sight of the phoenix. At his noise the phoenix looked at him and disappeared in a flash of fire; which brought his eyes higher up to the dark mark in the room effectively breaking him out of his trance.

Racing into the room he lifted Lily and turned to his wife. "We have to get out of here now" he snapped.

"What's going on?" Kim's voice trembled as she still looked at where the phoenix had been moments ago.

"We don't have time for this Kim! We need to get out of here now if we were going to make it out of here alive" this time he yelled at her as he made his way to the doorway carrying the unconscious Lily. Glancing back as he reached the door he saw his wife snap out of her trance and quickly begin to follow him.

He raced outside to the waiting car and shoved Lily in the back as quickly as he could ignoring his wife as she told him to be careful with her, knowing full well that they didn't have time to be careful. Looking at his wife carrying the little boy as well as a bag she must have picked up on the way out he once again snapped at her to get in the car as he sent a fearful look at the house behind him.

"I can't believe you left Sam alone" she huffed "could you open the trunk so I could put her bag....." she began but he quickly cut her off by him yelling "Now!"

As if finally seeing that something was really wrong she moved quickly into the car. The moment she shut the door he was off. Not waiting for her to get her seat belt on, or get the bag to the floor or even giving her time to settle the new born comfortably. Ignoring her gasp of surprise he glanced in the mirror in time to see wizards beginning to apparate. His eyes floated up towards the green smoke that had been forming when he arrived and saw the now clear green image of a skull and snake.

Rounding the corner and losing sight of Lily's house he glanced at his wife who was sitting beside clutched the baby for dear life as she to looked fearful in the mirror. She slowly turned her face towards him quietly pleading for him to tell her what had just happened.

Bringing a hand to her face he wiped a tear from her cheek.

"I'll explain everything once I'm sure were safe. I promise." Looking back at the road he inwardly groaned, that was not a conversation he had ever wanted to have. With a quick glimpse in the mirror at Lily he figured that the two of them were going to have to have a small talk as well.

## Chapter 4

The silence in the car was almost nerve racking. It had been well over an hour since her husband had raced into Lily's house frantically herding her into the car. This being said it had been well over an hour since her perfectly normal life had gone to hell.

What had started as a great day for Kim had turned into a confusing mess. It had started with her doing her normal chores around the house and playing with Sam. She had gotten the call from Lily that her water had broken at noon and had raced her daughter over to the baby sitter. Once at Lily's she had once again gone into her normal routine of preparing for the baby while comforting the mother. Of course this time had been a little different since she and Lily had become very good friends.

Yes, up until Lily had begun to push Kim's life had been going very normally. There were a few strange occurrences; like the lights in Lily's house flickering constantly when there was nothing to cause them to do so; but other than that everything had been fine.

When Lily had first started to push Kim had been in her element, she had been calm, supportive and prepared to help if anything went wrong. However she hadn't been prepared for Lily's sudden screams of terror.

She had looked up to see Lily's face full of fear looking over her shoulder. Kim had turned fearfully thinking that someone else was in the room with them ready to attack but had seen nothing. The warm room had suddenly seemed to turn cool. With a quick glance around the room she turned back to Lily to see what she could do to help lessen her fears and had nearly fallen over at the sight of a burning bird sitting beside Lily's stomach.

The bird had been nothing like anything she had ever seen and the sound it was making seemed to calm Lily enough for her to finish pushing her baby out. Quickly snapping out of it Kim had approached the bed carefully to not startle the strange bird and had finished her part of delivering the baby.

Much to Kim's panic the baby had not been breathing and seemed to be almost glowing a strange green color that she had never encountered before. However before she could even attempt anything to help the baby the strange bird had flown over to the end of the bed where she held the baby and had begun to cry on it. This of course really freaked her out considering there were no birds she could recall that could actually cry. But as the first tear made contact with baby's skin the green glow seemed to disappear. With the second drop the baby suddenly pulled in a small gasp of air and the third drop had the child letting out a hearty cry.

She would have dropped to the ground in relief however the strange bird had continued its almost soothing song. And then her husband was there and the bird just disappeared. And she had thought that nothing stranger could happen.

How wrong could she have been.

Mitch like Lily seemed to stare at something over her shoulder for half a second; all the color leaving his face and suddenly he was across the room yelling at her to move. He grabbed Lily quickly not being gentle at all towards a woman who was in very bad shape and raced out of the house.

Thinking her husband had just been in shock at the bird as well and he just wanted to get Lily to the hospital quickly she had followed stopping only to pick up Lily's emergency bag that she had had her put together incase they had to go to the hospital.

Once at the car she watched in horror as her husband practically threw Lily into the car were her baby girl had been all alone. She had begun to ream her husband out when she finally saw the look on his face; he was scared, not for just Lily but for all of them. He could see something that she couldn't; he could see whatever had terrified Lily.

Once in the car she had kept her eyes on the mirror to try and see what was there that could frighten two people she thought of as strong individuals. What she ended up seeing was not something she could even begin to explain. Before her very eyes people in dark cloaks began to pop up out of nowhere and storm into the house.

It was as she watched the strangers pop out of thin air that Kim admitted it to herself. Her once normal, peaceful life was over; she had just been initiated to a whole new way of life, what kind of life she wasn't sure but she was fairly sure it was going to be wilder than anything she could ever imagine.

She had also come to the realization that her husband was defiantly hiding something from her about his past and he had a lot of explaining to do. But before they could start that conversation they had to find a place to stop. They all needed rest and Lily was in desperate need of some medical attention immediately.

"Mitch, we have to stop. Lily needs help." She whispered to her husband hoping not to wake either Sam or the new born. She saw him glance in the mirror at Lily then nod slightly.

After another fifteen minutes of driving he finally pulled into a small motel.

Beginning to panic she whispered "This isn't really what I meant; she needs a doctor right now. I don't have a clue what just happened to her and this is way beyond anything I can help her with."

"Kim, trust me when I say there is nothing that a muggle doctor can do for her right now. All we can hope for is that with enough rest she'll be able to fight whatever is effecting her" That being said he left the car and went to rent a room.

His answer of course did nothing to relieve her worries; in fact his answer infuriated her. What did he know that she didn't? When did he become an expert of what a doctor could handle and couldn't? And lastly what the hell was a muggle?

By the time he was back Kim was nearly vibrating with anger. She helped him transfer the babies and Lily into the room then sat down on a chair facing Lily's bed holding two sleeping babies.

Mitch looked hesitantly at Lily before turning to Kim and sitting on the other bed.



“Kim, I know you’re confused right now but I need you to tell me exactly what happened in there” His dark brown eyes looked at her pleadingly that she would be just a little more patient with him. Letting out an angry sigh she retold the accounts of the night while studying his face for any reaction that would give her a hint of what had just happened.

At the mention of the bird and the tears he looked down at the little boy in her arms in shock.

“Are you sure it cried on him? Absolutely positive?” At her nod he looked at Lily who seemed to be deteriorating quickly. Kim watched as thoughts seemed to fly through his head before he stood up and took the little boy from her arms ignoring her protests and walked over to Lily placing the child on her chest.

“What are you doing?” she asked quietly while shifting her gaze from Lily to her husband trying to figure out what he was trying to accomplish by placing the baby on his mother.

However before he could answer Lily gave a little moan drawing her eyes back to the bed. Before her very eyes Lily seemed to heal. Her skin became less chalky and her unsteady breathing began to get better. She went from looking like she was at death’s door in a coma to looking like she was in a very peaceful sleep. This thought was confirmed for Kim when Lily’s arms came up slowly and she cuddled her baby to her.

Mitch took a step back at this point while still looking at the new mother and child on the bed. Kim watched as he turned suddenly and ran out the door. Before she could even get up to follow him he returned with Lily’s emergency bag.

She watched curiously as he went to the other bed and opened the bag and began to go through it. He first pulled out a couple of sets of clothes and a couple of baby clothes, a bottle and diapers. The next thing he pulled out was a blanket; Kim raised an eye brow as he began to unroll it, when a wad of money fell out she let out a small gasp and finally got off of the chair and made her way to her husband

who had actually ignored the money as if searching for something more. When he froze she knew he had found what he was looking for. Pulling out a stick he looked from it to Lily then very carefully put it down. He reached for a book in the bag and went to put it down when he froze and once again looked at the stick then back at the book before opening it.

The first couple of pictures showed a young Lily with what must have been her family. Her husband flipped through the pictures rather quickly as if looking for something. He was about half way through the book when she finally understood what he was looking for. The pictures had begun to move, waving at them, or the people in the pictures just interacted with the other people in the picture. She watched fascinated as a younger Lily was being tickled mercilessly by a taller boy with dark brown messy hair but it was the boy in the background that really caught her attention. He was just walking across the picture not really paying attention to Lily or the other boy but he would glance every so often towards them. She recognized him, well not him but his features. Looking slowly towards her husband he raises his head and looks down at her and almost grins while shaking his head.

“Well there’s no hiding anything now is there” he sighs in almost defeat and looks down at the picture again “that boy in the background is Severus Snape..... My brother..... Who is a wizard.”

Her thought process seemed to stop at that point or perhaps it just began to go re-peat since only one thought seemed to be going over and over in her head that there was no such thing as magic. Then she would look back down at the book in her husband’s hands and watch Lily squirm and laugh as she tried to get out of the brown haired boy’s arms. Moving pictures where not possible and it did seem like magic..... But there was no such thing as magic.

After going through this cycle repeatedly she finally looked up at her husband who was looking down at her waiting for her to say something, his dark eyes looking into her own filled with such mixed emotions but the ones that she could see the most were sadness, fear and love. Deciding it was defiantly time to say something she opened her mouth and let the first thing she could think of out.

"A what? There is no such thing as wizard's, what next your going to tell me that you can do magic. Is this your idea of some strange joke Mitch? Because if it is you need to stop now and we need to get Lily real help." But even as she said this her eyes once again drifted to the moving picture and then over to where Lily lay with her baby looking healthier by the minute.

She felt a hand on her shoulder pushing her down until she sat on the bed holding Samantha close to her. She watched as Mitch knelt down in front of her and looked at their daughter then up into her eyes. He lifted her hand and wiped a tear from her cheek making her realize that she was indeed crying and breathing rather heavily. Taking a deep breath she tried to relax even as she new that what he was going to say was going to confirm what she had already guessed; that he was indeed telling the truth.

"I said that my brother is wizard not that I am. I can't do magic and that is the reason that my parents kicked me out of my home and disowned me. The bird you saw earlier was a phoenix just like the stories you hear about; their tears hold magical properties that can heal" he paused and looked over at Lily before turning back to look at her. "My name is not Mitch Carlson, I was born Mitchel Thomas Snape the heir of my family. I come from a very long line of pure bloods.... people who are conceived from two magical people."

"Like with muggles" he paused again and sighed running his hand over his face. "People who have no magic and are from families with no magic. There are both good and bad wizards. At the moment there is a fanatic wizard who believes that anyone who is not a pure blood should die."

"A couple of years ago my brother came to me telling me that he had orders to kill me from this fanatic or we would both die. Instead we faked my death and I went into hiding. Did you see those people appear out of no where in front of Lily's house?" she nodded dumbly trying to process the information he was throwing at her. "They were followers of this fanatic. They were able to appear by apparating which is a form of wizard travel."

“Above Lily’s bed and her house was the sign of this fanatic. I have only seen it twice; once on my brother’s arm and the last time my brother shot it into the sky when we faked my death. They were there to kill Lily, which is the only reason they would have been there.” Mitch stopped again still knelling in front of her.

After a moment of silence he stood abruptly and began to pace.

“Merlin I’m not explaining this well at all” he groaned out.

“No you’re really not..... But let me see if I’ve got the gist of it. You say Merlin all the time because you’re from a wizard family. Your last name is not Carlson. There is an insane wizard attempting to kill everyone and all most succeeded in killing you years ago through your brother; who I didn’t even know about; and this wizard almost killed Lily tonight. Is that about right?” Kim snapped out letting her confusion and frustration out.

He nodded slightly before sitting on the bed next to her and took the piece of wood.

“You’ve just about got it all but there is a bit more. That picture in the book would have had to have been taken at Hogwarts a school for magical people. That would mean that Lily is a witch. The fact that she has this” he held up the wood “confirms that she is. This is a wand which allows her focus her magic. The fact that she went to you to deliver her baby added to the fact that those wizards appeared most likely means that she is in hiding. It would be best if we left her right now and moved ourselves.”

Kim looked at her husband in horror the thought of leaving her defenseless friend and a new born was absolutely preposterous. He must have seen that on her face because he once again sighed.

“I didn’t think you would go for that.” He mumbled.

“I need to think about all this. It’s just too much to take in right now.” Getting up she handed Samantha to Mitch before going over to Lily to clean her up and ensure that she and the baby were alright. Having done everything she could for Lily she walked back to Mitch and took

Samantha. Cuddling her baby to her she walked to the other side of the bed and laid down placing Samantha on the middle of the bed. Closing her eyes she listened as her husband got up and began to clean up Lily's things.

She felt like someone had just punched her in the gut. The man she had married had basically told her one lie after another for the whole time they had been together. She was married to a stranger. Not only was she married to a stranger, but her whole world had been flipped upside down. Apparently there was a whole other world out there filled with magic. And Lily..... Lily a person she considered a kindred spirit had also been most likely lying to her. Yet she couldn't get the nagging thought out of her head that they had both been lying to her for safety reasons.

Mitch thought it would be best for them to leave Lily. She knew that he was thinking of their family and what was best for them. Was he right? Perhaps she should just get up and grab Sam and leave Lily alone. Even as this thought crossed her mind she knew she couldn't do that. She knew how hard it was to take care of Samantha with the help of Mitch and that was without having to look over her shoulder all the time for a lunatic. She could still remember meeting Lily and how lonely she had looked. The two of them had been great friends since that day and she did consider Lily almost like a sister. No there would be no leaving Lily. Wasn't there a saying that it was better to stick in numbers when there was danger. And yes she was confused about this whole wizarding world but she would just take that one day at a time. Whether Mitch or Lily knew it yet she had just decided they were going to stick together. She wouldn't abandon Lily or the baby.

Feeling slightly better at having worked out a bit of the whole mess; she let herself fall asleep while her mind tried to wrap itself over all the facts that she had just learned.

## Chapter 5

It had been three years since she gave birth to her beautiful baby boy.

Three years since the death eater attack had forced her to go on the run again.

And three years since Lily had woken up in the motel room to Kim's insistent voice that she get up and feed her baby.

Yes it had been three years since Lily had once again died and taken on a new identity. Although this time she wasn't alone.

A shriek of laughter coming from the living room had Lily smile softly to herself as she listened to the sound of little feet racing down the hallway towards her room. Turning on her side she closed her eyes pretending to sleep and waited for the inevitable to happen.

The door swung open and small giggles came from the doorway. Keeping as still as possible she waited for opportunity; years of having lived with the Marauders around had taught Lily to be patient.

When she heard the giggles beside the bed she struck. Turning over quickly she grabbed the closest child to her and dragged him onto the bed and began to tickle him mercilessly. Grinning down at the little boy who was now trying to get away as he shrieked with laughter she couldn't help but feel a little bit of sadness. He looked so much like his father it hurt her sometimes to look at him. He had her bone structure and her eyes but almost everything else he got from his father. Including that damn Potter hair that always seemed to be messy; like he had just rolled out of bed or just gotten off of a broom.

He also had the same playful attitude that James had always had. It wasn't that she was sad that he looked and acted like James at times; she actually loved that he looked like his father and that he was able to have fun. No it broke her heart that James had never seen their precious little boy.

"Auntie Lily stop it!" A little girl's voice shouted from behind her as a small pair of hands began to tickle her sides. Turning towards the

voice she looked into a now very familiar pair of dark brown eyes that gleamed with mischief and seriousness all at the same time. Abandoning her attack on the little boy she turned her attack on the little girl and began to tickle her while the little boy tried to catch his breath between his giggles.

“Having fun” a voice drawled from the doorway causing Lily to look up from her prey. She smiled sheepishly at Mitch who was leaning against the door frame sneering slightly while amusement danced in his eyes.

“I believe we were; weren’t we” she said as she looked down once again at the small children who were nodding enthusiastically.

“I see. I am assuming that they did not get around to telling you that breakfast will be ready momentarily.” Mitch said dryly as he looked at the two children in the bed who now were trying to look at him as innocently as possible.

“Hmm, I don’t think we got around to that. Alright up you two and out you get.” She shoed the little urchins out her bed and watched as they ran out of the room. Noticing the steaming cup in Mitch’s hand she grinned slightly. “I’ll be out in minute, but you can leave the coffee you know” Rolling his eyes slightly he placed the cup on the dresser and closed the door.

Getting out of bed she looked down at her sheets and snickered softly; it looked like there had been a war. Quickly making the bed, she threw on her robe and grabbed the coffee taking a big sip of it and let out a small sigh. There was nothing like a nice cup of coffee in the morning especially after a battle.

She slowly made her way to the kitchen where she could hear Kim’s exasperated voice over the kids and every now and then a snicker from Mitch. Stopping just outside of the kitchen she looked in at the havoc.

Kim was rushing from the stove to the table attempting to cook, set the table and dodge little ones while Mitch sat at the table reading the paper occasionally looking up to watch his wife.

Lily and Mitch had learned long ago to stay out of Kim's way when she was in the kitchen. It was her territory and no one was allowed to help and that included setting the table. It was one of her little quirks. She did occasionally let the kids help her mix batters and lick spoons but she very rarely let anyone else help her. The kitchen was her domain, which in all honesty was just fine with Lily since she had never truly loved to cook anyways.

She and James had used to take turns cooking their meals since neither of them had ever truly enjoyed it. She could cook as long as there was a recipe to follow or if she had done it before. James on the other hand had never gotten the hang of it. He would for the most part attempt to cook something then fire call Sirius and tell him to pick up some fast food on his way over. Smiling slightly at the memory she looked down at the kids who were now playing under the table.

She had named her baby Harry James after his grandfather on her side and of course after his own father. He might not be able to carry his father's last name but at least part of his name would be from his dad. She and James had discussed baby names before she had left. She had wanted him to be part of the naming of their child even if he didn't know he was. She had brought up the subject as a 'what if' question one time as they were talking about the Longbottoms. James had liked the idea of naming a boy Harry after her father who James had gotten along famously with.

It had been almost scary how well James had gotten along with her dad. Up until her father had died her dad had used to call just to talk to James and vice versa; her mom had always laughed saying that Lily had found the son that her father had always wanted. The fact that her father and James had gotten along so well had pissed Petunia off royally. Her father had never gotten along that well with Vernon who was a bit to stuck up for his taste although he did try to hide the fact that he wasn't fond of Vernon. But it always showed when both Vernon and James were in the same room as her father.

Looking at the girl playing with Harry she smiled. The little girl looked like a little elf with a very dainty frame, pale skin and ebony black hair that looked so soft you just wanted to run your fingers through it.



She still couldn't believe how big a part that little girl had come to play in her life. Little Samantha Snape. She tried to hold back the snicker that came with that thought. She just couldn't believe the role the Snape's had taken in her life. When she had first met Severus she would never have thought that his family would become such an important part of her life. Hell, who would have? For seven years he had taken almost any chance to call her foul names. Then of course she had become a Potter who was sort of his mortal enemy. But when it came down to saving her life he had gone over the call of duty. She wasn't stupid; she knew that if Voldemort ever found out that he had helped her Severus would be dead.

She would have thought that Severus' help would have been the only help from the Snape family she would ever get; how wrong she had been again.

When Lily had woken that morning in the motel room she hadn't known what had hit her. Only Kim was with her along with Sam and Harry. Kim had propped her up ordering her to take it easy although Lily hadn't really known why Kim was insisting for her to take it easy since she had felt fine. The memory of the birth had been slightly hazy at first slowly becoming clearer until she had almost started to panic.

She remembered looking frantically over Harry trying to ensure that everything was all right with him; that he hadn't been hurt in any way. Kim had sat on the side of the bed trying to get her to calm down while Lily had panicked not truly believing that Kim understood the danger.

When Kim had finally blurted out that Mitch was a Snape Lily had gone slightly into shock and then worry. Her mind had whirled around that fact trying to see if that was a good thing or a reason to take Harry and run as fast as she could. It had probably been fortunate that Mitch had arrived back shortly with a bag of food. He had stared at her for a minute before asking three simple questions.

What was her real name?

How did the dark lord find her?

And finally why was she hiding?

Yes very simple questions.

At her answers he had gone extremely quiet although he had sworn slightly when she had said that she was a Potter. He had looked at Harry for a moment and had shaken his head slightly muttering something about the Potter Heir. When she had replied that she didn't know how Voldemort had found her he had stared at her in the eyes for several minutes as if trying to confirm that she was telling the truth. The last question she had paused for a moment not truly knowing whether or not she should tell him about the prophecy. Finally deciding that he had a right to know what kind of trouble his family was in she had told him about the prophecy and how only two children now fit it as long as Alice had had no problems during the labor.

Mitch had sworn at that point and began to pace; Kim had sat holding Samantha close watching her husband then looking at Lily with a reassuring smile. After about ten minutes of pacing Mitch had finally stopped and glanced at his wife before letting out a small sigh that she was fairly sure had been a swear.

She had felt so alone at that point trying to think of where to go from there knowing that she was once again going to have to run. Her mind had tried to remember if Severus had mentioned how he got her the fake id so she could get new ones. She had been holding Harry as close as she could looking into his emerald green eyes so much like her own when Mitch had finally spoken.

"Well where should we go from here? Any place in particular that you've always wanted to go? We'll head to our house tomorrow and pack everything we need into the car..... I'll purchase a van today that should work better" As Mitch had started muttering only talking slightly towards her and Kim she had felt like the world had been slightly lifted off of her shoulders. She had quickly glanced towards Kim to see her absolutely beaming at her husband and turning to look at her with the same radiating face.

Lily had been flabbergasted at the time and Mitch must have noticed because when he had looked at her he had actually snickered. He had snidely asked her if she had ever met his wife and if she had truly thought that they would be leaving her on her own.

After getting over her shock the three of them had talked over their options for hours. Mitch had left to buy a van during the afternoon and had sold their car for the extra cash. After arguing over where to go they had finally decided back to England in one of the smaller towns in hope to blend in much to Mitch's disgust.

Lily was to be Kim's sister who had recently lost her husband and was living with them for the support and so her child would have the benefits of a family. They came up with a rather simple story of Lily being adopted to explain why she and Kim shared absolutely no features in common should the question ever come up.

It had taken Mitch a month for him to secure good id for all of them. Kim had been blown away at how easy it had actually been as much as Lily had been the first time. Mitch had made sure to explain to both of them how to get the id if they should ever need to do it and he wasn't there to help. Kim hadn't truly understood why her husband had made sure she understood the procedure well enough to repeat it but Lily had. She had understood that he was making sure that they would know what to do if there was another attack and he should die and they actually survived.

They had been extremely careful leaving France and hiding Lily in case any of the death eaters were looking for her. They new they had to be careful since the death eaters were going to be searching for the family that had gotten away from their raid which both Mitch and Lily new was not coincidental but they took it as a good sign everyday that they were not attacked.

They had arrived in a small town in England and had slowly allowed themselves to settle in and stop looking over their shoulders at every noise. It hadn't been until they had felt safe that Lily had started to research what had happened that night. She still wasn't sure about how Voldemort found her that night but after she had managed to get

hold of a Daily Prophet from the end of July she had allowed herself to calm down a little. She had been shocked to read one of the headings of the Prophet 'Another baby killed at birth by You-Know-Who.' After reading that she had gone to the local library and had gotten hold of old muggle newspapers from July and had read articles about the mysterious miscarriages happening all over Europe during that month. There were many articles about what had been happening and scientific research to try and explain the incidents. Even as the articles sickened her they had been a relief for Lily to read since it supported the idea that Voldemort was not taking any chance with the prophecy and had done some sort of spell that would kill any child born that month that showed any potential in magic. There might not be a lot of full wizards born among muggles but there were a fair amount of muggle children born with some sort of magical tendency which usually went untrained.

Having decided that Voldemort did not truly know that it was her who had gotten away; or that Harry did fit the prophecy to a tee she had begun to concentrate her attentions to what had happened to Harry with the phoenix.

To get the books to do the research she had dyed her hair black which was extremely unflattering with her complexion and had taken the chance of going to Diagon Alley. The whole trip she had been a case of nerves. She had bought an owl and gotten owl order forms from both the apothecary shop as well as several book shops. She had not lingered there long but no one really did.

After months of research she had come up with very little other than there were absolutely no other cases of a phoenix crying on a newly born child. She had read in one of her books for new mothers of magical children, the muggle witch edition, that it was believed that babies could absorb a lot of magic during the first couple of days of their lives. After much discussion with Mitch who understood the basics of magic they had decided that the pure magic of the phoenix tears must have absorbed into Harry making him a bit of a medical mystery that they would have to figure out as they went.

From what they had seen over the years was that Harry never got sick or bruised in any way no matter how rough he and Samantha

played. They had also noticed that if someone wasn't feeling well they could cuddle with Harry and would feel better quickly although it was never as fast as it had been the night of his birth. After cutting himself one time while shaving Mitch had discovered by accident that Harry could at times heal the nicks; however this did not happen all the time.

The roar that both Mitch and Lily had heard was still a mystery especially since Kim had no idea what they were talking about making them understand that it had been some kind of magic but it was still unknown what kind.

Bringing her thoughts back to the present she looked at her family. Mitch had become some what of an older brother. She watched as he lifted Samantha into a chair then Harry into one on the other side of the table. He tried not to show it often but he was absolutely wrapped around both of their little fingers. Kim swept across the room and put a plate of French toast on the table before moving to a seat beside Sam.

Smiling Lily finally entered the room taking a seat next to Harry. The talk around the table was familiar as was the after breakfast rush of Mitch leaving for work to a small accounting office and Kim going to see one of her expecting mothers. They had worked out their system over the years. Lily took the day shift on watching the rug rats while Kim at times helped. Mitch would come home at around six allowing Lily a couple more hours of sleep before she went to work at a bar as the waitress. It wasn't a glorious job and a lot of sleazy men hit on her but it allowed her to make good money in tips and spend the days with the kids. She would get home around three in the morning and catch a few hours of sleep.

She would always thank her lucky star that she had been born one of those people who didn't need much sleep and could catch a couple hours here and there with dreams of James. Her dreams of James were a blessing and a curse. She would see him frequently enough that she didn't miss him but at the same time they would make her miss him more. He always started off by asking her where she was and begging her to come home to him. After this they would talk while he held her, when they felt the dream fade he would beg her not to

take of her ring which she always promised she wouldn't. And she hadn't. No matter how many times she had tried to talk herself into taking it off she just couldn't part with it.

"Mommy!" snapping back to reality she looked up from her wedding ring and looked at Harry who had obviously been trying to get her attention for some time. Grinning down at him and Sam she got up from the table and began to clear the dishes while listening to the two three year olds talk non stop.

Life might not be perfect but it at least it had been kind to her.

## Chapter 6

Once again sorry for the long wait.

Harry looked outside the window longingly at the tree in his backyard. He was sure that he would be able to climb to the top of it. Just yesterday his friend Mike had been bragging that he had climbed the tree on the playground and had said that he could see all the way to Mr. Kaligan's house which was quiet the distance. And the tree in Harry's backyard was so much bigger then the one in the playground he'd probably be able to see all of England. He had been dieing to climb it since hearing all the cool things that Mike had seen.

"Harry! You said you'd play with me" a voice interrupted his dreams of what he was going to see. Looking away from the window Harry looked at Sam who was holding up a frilly dress while she herself was already wearing one of her party dresses. Warily eyeing the dress in Sam's hands the six year old took a cautious step back to get closer to the door.

"What do you want play?" he asked while his eyes darted from the dress in her hands to the play table that had Sam's doll and his stuffed deer already sat at.

"Dress up, then we can have a tea party with Miss Shelly and Miss Prongs" Sam said as she gestured to her doll and his teddy. "Here put this on you can be Miss Harriett. Mommy gave us a cookie each and we can pretend the milk is tea." She said excitedly as she threw the dress at him.

Jumping back quickly he dodged the dress flung his way and watched as it hit the floor at his feet.

"I'm not wearing that... that dress!" He cried out as he pointed in horror at the dress on the floor. "I'm a boy and boys don't wear dresses. And Prongs is a boy too" Harry said as he ran to the table and grabbed his deer.

"Harry you said you'd play with me. You promised." Sam said as she glared at him.

“Well I thought you’d want to do something fun like play football”

“I don’t like football”

“Well I’m not dressing in that” he yelled as he pointed at the dress once again and took off for the door.

“Fine! Then you can’t come to tea and have your cookie”

Harry froze outside the room and looked back at the table that was set with small dishes. Sure enough on the center of the table were two chocolate chip cookies. Glancing at the dress once again on the floor then back at the cookie he made up his mind.

Sighing he walked back in the room and picked up the dress glaring at Sam the whole time who was smirking at him. Walking closer to the table he began to undo the zipper at the back of the dress.

“Hurry up Harry the tea will get cold” Sam said as she poured the milk into the little cups.

“Yeah yeah” he mumbled as he looked up at Sam again who was smiling sweetly now and sitting at the table. Looking back down at the dress he grinned; it was time for action.

Throwing the dress at Sam he grabbed one of the cookies and made a dash out the door. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Sam’s eyes go wide as she caught the dress instinctively.

“Harry!” She screamed behind him and he knew she would make chase.

Laughing he ran down the stairs and into the kitchen where his mom was on the phone. As he came through the doorway she looked up at him and smiled as she placed a finger to her lips indicating that he should be quiet.

Turning quickly, he was about to make a dash for the sitting room when the front door opened and a tall man with black hair walked in.



Before Harry could do anything Sam came racing down the stairs scowling at him.

“Harry give it back” Sam began to rant as she made her way towards him but before she could finish whatever she was going to say the man at the door cleared his throat.

Sam whipped around and gave a small scream of delight before throwing herself at the man who caught her with ease and lifted her up.

The man looked at Sam and smiled down at her and then looked over at Harry and raised an eyebrow. Grinning Harry raced over to the man and gave him a hug.

Hearing Sam telling the man all about her day and how Harry wouldn't play with her Harry quickly began to give his own version of the day. Hearing laughter behind him he turned and saw Kim and his mom.

“Your home early Mitch” Kim said as she and Lily made there way across the room to one of the sofas. Mitch nodded and made his way to the other sofa while carrying his daughter. Not one to be left out Harry raced over to his mom and curled up on the sofa beside her.

The grown ups talked for awhile but Harry for the most part ignored them His name had come up a few times and his mom sounded a little tired but at the moment he was very busy. Sam sat across from glaring at him not breaking eye contact and there was no way that he was going to lose a staring contest.

“So Princess why don't you tell me what you and Harry were both trying to tell me earlier. Mitch said as looked down at Sam. Harry grinned when Sam was forced to look away making him the winner of the contest.

“Daddy, I'm almost seven now. I'm no longer a princess I'm a queen.” Sam said with an air of authority.

“Oh really, well I’m so sorry my majesty” Mitch drawled not bring up the fact that it would be several months still before she turned seven. Beside him, his mom was trying to hold in her laughter but failing badly.

“God help us now.” He heard Kim sigh. Leaning forward so he could see Kim he saw that she was grinning, as well as shaking her head.

After talking for a while longer his mom turned to him and smiled sadly down at him before lifting him and placing him on her lap.

“Harry darling we need to talk about what happened at school today.” Looking at his mom curiously he tried to think if he had gotten into trouble. It was only two weeks into the school year and he couldn’t really think of anything that would make his mom sad. There of course was that cool incident on the playground during lunch when Kelly’s usually white blond hair had turned fluorescent green. But he hadn’t done that he knew it for a fact.

“Harry you remember when I talked to you about how we were different from those around us. Not different in a bad way but still different. And how we had to hide we were different until you were older.” His mom paused as she looked down at him smiling softly. Nodding at her he decided to make a guess at what this talk was about.

“This is about Kelly’s hair isn’t it? But mom I wasn’t even mad at her so I couldn’t have done it.” He piped in.

“Harry it is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact in our world it would be a cause to celebrate that you were showing magic so young. And I am proud of you; but you really have to try and control it like we’ve been working on at home.”

“But mom I really wasn’t mad at Kelly.” He whined as he tried to convince his mom.

“I was! We were playing and she said that she got to be the good witch because she had blond hair and I had to be the ugly bad witch

because I had black ugly hair. And then her hair turned green” Sam cried out fuming as she remembered.

Silence met this declaration and the adults looked at Sam with concern.

“Does this mean that Samantha has magic?” Kim finally asked what the other two adults hadn’t dared. But Mitch was already shaking his head.

“It’s unheard of for a squib to have a child that has magic. It takes generations for the magic to build up enough in a squibs decedents for them to be able to do magic. However my brother used to do accidental magic when I was in trouble or upset. Maybe....” Mitch paused then looked over at Harry. “Harry were you by any chance around Sam when she and Kelly were fighting?”

“Yeah most of the class was” he answered honestly.

“Well that explains it. Harry was defending Sam without knowing it. I don’t know how you can work with that Lily. It’s one thing to help him control his magic when it’s his own emotions; it is an entirely different thing when it’s not even his emotions triggering the magic.” Mitch said while looking at his mom.

“What if we try giving Sam the same lessons that you give Harry. If she can control her emotions then maybe Harry’s magic wont react to them.” Kim piped up after another long bout of silence.

His mom nodded. “That might just work. And if it doesn’t well at least we’ll have tried something.”

After another ten minutes of listening to the adults talk Harry was getting very board. He squirmed in his moms arms until she finally looked down at him.

“Harry why don’t you and Sam go play outside and enjoy the sun” his mom said as she pushed him towards the door. Grinning he dashed out the door and into the backyard hearing Sam behind him. Stopping

once he was outside he looked over at Sam and yelled “Not it” before taking off.

Sam squealed behind him and took up chase. They chased each other around the backyard for awhile before Sam declared that she was tired and went over to the swing set. He began to follow her until his eyes fell upon the tree once again.

Grinning he ran to the tree. The first branch was just out of his reach but not letting that discourage him Harry began to search for something to help him up. Spotting one of the patio chairs he raced over to it and pulled it to the tree. Stepping up on to it he grabbed the first branch and pulled himself up.

“Come on Sam!” He called over to Sam as he reached for the next branch and continued up.

He heard laughter beneath him and he looked down and saw Sam beginning to make her way up the tree still in her party dress. He was half way up the tree when he looked down again and gasped. He was up so high it was absolutely amazing.

“Look down Sam” he called down to Sam who wasn’t making her way up the tree quite as fast as him. She looked up at him and then down. She gave a small cry and latched on to the branch for dear life.

“Harry I don’t like this. I..... I don’t know how to get down.” She cried out and looked back up at him with tears in her eyes.

Frowning down at her he looked back up the tree. He was so close to the top he didn’t want to go back down yet.

“Can you hold on for a little bit? I want to reach the top then I’ll help you down.” He said even as he continued going up.

“No! I really want to get down now” she said

“Stop being a baby I’ll only be a little bit.” He snapped back at her feeling bad but at the same time he was too close to the top to stop.

Finally he reached the top and looked around him. He gasped, it was absolutely amazing. He could see all the way to the school. He heard a bird to his right and looked at it flying. Closing his eyes he imagined that he too was flying.

“Sam! Harry! Dinner” he heard Kim call from the house. Sighing he looked once again at the sights he was able to see absolutely loving the feeling of being this high up.

“Daddy!” He heard Sam scream beneath him. Rolling his eyes he looked over at the house and saw Mitch and his mom come out.

“Daddy help me I’m stuck” Sam cried hysterically. He watched as Mitch froze and looked for Sam. When Mitch located her his eyes quickly began to search the tree.

“Up here mom! Mitch!” He called down to them knowing it was him that they were searching the tree for. He grinned down at them as they seemed to falter in there steps.

“Harry I want you to come down nice and slow” his mom called up to him as Mitch helped Sam out of the lower branches. His mom sounded slightly panicky; didn’t she know how amazing it was up here?

Looking down once again he saw that Sam was almost out of the tree and Mitch was clearly trying to help her out while keeping an eye on him. Sighing he decided it was probably about time for him to make his way down. Shifting his weight to step down he heard a loud crack and felt the branch he was holding give way. He tried to grab anything to keep his balance but before he could he found himself falling backwards.

He heard his mother, Kim and Sam scream as well as Mitch bellow. He let out a little gasp as the wind raced around his body. Slowly he felt his magic surround him. In his mind he could see flames and something standing in the flames demanding that he grab it, embrace it. Out of instinct he reached for whatever was in the flames.

He felt his body shifting almost like it was changing. The experience was unlike anything he had ever felt before. However the change felt natural.

Sensing the ground coming up quickly beneath him he turned his body so his feet would land on the ground and he bent his legs in order to absorb the impact. He didn't really understand how he knew what to do but he did.

He landed on the ground and let out a small hiss as his body absorbed the shock of the fall. Looking up he looked at his mother who had gone very pale. He could hear Sam off to his right asking what had happened to Harry. This caused him to look over at her in confusion. He began to panic then when he realized that he had to look up at Sam. He tried to tell his family that he was fine but instead words coming out of his mouth a small indistinct sound came out.

Before the panic could really set in a red and gold bird appeared in front of him.

Hello my child he jumped slightly as a voice sounded in his head. I was beginning to wonder when you would change.

Harry looked curiously at the bird in front of him who almost seemed to be laughing at his confusion. There is no need to panic. We will have to begin your training soon little one, so you can understand how to use the magic you have been given. He watched as the bird looked over at his mom and then back at him.

But your training will have to wait for another day. For now let us get you back to your human form. As if sensing his confusion again the voice let out a small laugh. I will show you how to do this; there is no need for fear little one. It felt like another presence was in his mind, guiding him to what he had to think of until he was able to see himself surrounded by a soft blue. You have been given a gift little one of having two magical cores. I will have to teach you how to use one of them but do not worry about that at the moment. For now embrace the core in front of you. Feeling more puzzled on how to do this he closed his eyes and let his instincts lead him.

Like before he felt his body shifting. Opening his eyes he saw the bird still in front of him singing a song he hadn't been able to hear before. And then the bird was gone and he was swept into his mothers frantic arms as she cried.

Just a little note

I can't really think of what type of excercises Lily has been doing with Harry to help him control his magical out bursts so your all going to have to use you imaginations. Sorry about that.

## Chapter 7

Lily sat in a chair by her son's bed running her hand through his hair as he slept. She had almost lost him today. When she and Mitch had gone outside at Samantha's frantic calls she had just about fainted seeing Harry at the top of the tree. She had stared paralyzed at the branch he stood on which barely held his weight, knowing that at any moment it would break.

Never in all her life had she been more terrified.

Not that time that she had insisted to Petunia that she could swim and jumped into the pool and almost drowned.

Not her first flying lesson when someone had bumped into her and she had fallen.

Not even seeing the dark mark over her bed while giving birth to Harry could compare to the fear she had felt seeing her son about to fall.

It was immobilizing. She had been sure that she was going to lose her baby right in front of her eyes and there had been very little that she could have done. She hadn't had her wand on her at the time since she very rarely carried it any more in fear that she would slip up and use it and some might get the magical signature. And even if she did have her wand on her she could only hope that she would have been able to use it quickly enough. She truly wasn't even sure that she would have been able to do that. The truth was that she just hadn't used enough magic lately to feel confident that she would have caught him in time.

And that was going to have to change. She might not be in the magical world any more but she was going to need to begin practicing magic more frequently so she would be able to protect her family if something did occur. It was not an option to just hide in the muggle world and hope that the war would leave her and her son alone. What if it had been Death Eaters that had attacked and she didn't even have a wand on her to defend herself let alone save Harry.



She smiled as Harry leaned into her hand like a puppy or kitten would do. Her smile slide off of her face with that thought. What in Merlin had happened today? She had witnessed it and still did not understand what had occurred.

When the branch had finally broken she had snapped out of her daze but before she could even move Harry had begun to glow... No it hadn't been glowing he had begun to burn. Suddenly her little boy was gone and in his place was a small cat at her feet.

She had starred at the little cat in shock. She knew about accidental magic of course. She had done it as a child and a few times during her pregnancy. She had heard stories from her friends and James about their experiences with accidental magic. Hell she had even seen Harry do accidental magic before but this was ridicules.

She had studied the small cat for a moment taking in its size which had been just slightly bigger then normal house cat. Some of his features were too large for his body which had made her come to the conclusion that he was still a kitten. In fact reflecting on it now he had resembled the mountain lion kitten that she had seen at the zoo last year. Of course the coloring was off, instead being a golden brown, his fur was the same color as his hair; a dark brown which was nearly black. The tips however appeared to be almost on fire having hints of red and gold. The green eyes were what truly reminded her that this wasn't just a cat but her little boy.

After studying Harry she had begun to panic again. Transfiguration had never been her strong class; in fact if she was being completely honest it had been one of her worst. A fact that James had never let her live down. Her thoughts at the time had circled around how she was going to help her son.

She had watched helplessly as Harry had looked up at her and then over at Sam before letting out a little mewing sound. He had jumped a little at the sound and then stumbled when he tried to walk to her which she could only guess was because he was unused to four legs. She had been just about to reach down and pick him up when a burst of flame came.

To say she had been startled to see a phoenix would be an understatement. She had only ever seen the amazing bird twice and that was more times than most wizards could say. The two times had been of course in Dumbledors office and at Harry's birth. She couldn't even say if the bird was the same one or not.

The phoenix attempted to calm her nerves by singing a few notes and then seemed to almost chuckle when it didn't work.

Of course she wasn't going to calm down her son was a cat!

She had watched in amazement as the phoenix turned back to her son and seemed to talk to Harry. This belief was confirmed when the cat had cocked his head to the side the same way Harry did when he was trying to understand what someone was saying to him. Before her very eyes her son once again went up in flames and instead of a cat at her feet was her baby boy.

She had snatched him off the ground the second he was back to being her messy haired little boy. Clutching him to her chest she had frantically ran her hands over him trying to make sure that he was really alright.

She must have been crying as well as babbling at the time because she hadn't even noticed Kim leading her into the house. She had continued to hold Harry until he had begun to squirm and even then it had taken Kim and Mitch to pry him out of her arms.

"Mom?" Lily snapped back to the present time and looked down at her baby who was watching her through sleepy eyes.

"Go back to sleep darling" she whispered and fought back the tears when he gave her the same smile James used to give her when he was trying to placate her.

"It really was cool at the top of the tree mom. You should try it" Harry said grinning at her obviously thinking that would make her happy. Ah yes her son was just as good at calming her down as her husband had been. At this rate she was going to have an ulcer before she was thirty.

It truly was amazing how invincible children thought they were.

“Harry I am sure that it was very cool at the top of the tree but we already talked about that.” She said sternly trying to drill in the importance of not climbing trees especially without adult supervision.

“But Mom!” Harry started again but she cut him off before he could start again that everyone else was allowed to. Pulling the covers up she stood and kissed his brow.

“Go back to sleep sweetheart, I didn’t mean to wake you” She turned and made her way out of the room.

“Love you mommy” she heard the soft whisper as she closed the door making her smile.

POV Change

“Love you mommy” he whispered as he watched his mom retreat from his room before sitting up in bed. He wasn’t tired at all. His mom had insisted that he must be absolutely exhausted and had sent him to bed early.

He thought about turning on a light and playing with his transformers but he knew from experience that if he turned on the light either his mom or Kim would come in to check up on him.

Harry just didn’t understand what everyone was so worked up about. So what if he had fallen out of the tree his magic had obviously helped him and he was fine. His mom had even told him when they had started the meditation exercises that if he was in danger his magic would help him. So he could not understand why everyone was so upset.

Flopping back down he grabbed his stuffed stag Prongs and tried to figure out why everyone was acting so weird.

His mom kept coming to check on him running her hands through his hair as she fought back tears.

Mitch kept looking at him oddly and whispering to his mom. He had overheard Mitch saying he had never heard of anything like this. When Mitch wasn't looking at him oddly or whispering he was trying to calm down Kim and Sam.

Kim had looked rather pale during dinner and had ignored everything going on around her.

Sam was reacting the worst out of everyone. She kept staring at him like he had two heads then bursting into tears. And for the life of him he couldn't figure out why.

They were acting scared of him.

Gasping he sat up quickly. That was it! They were scared of him. They didn't like him anymore. His heart began to pound as fear after fear began to rush through his mind.

Clutching Prongs tightly he buried his head into the stuffed toy and started to cry.

He jumped slightly when he felt the bed shift and a hand land on his back rubbing comforting circles.

"Shh Harry, it's going to be okay. Just let it all out."

Looking up he saw Mitch sitting next to him looking slightly uncomfortable before burrowing his head back into Prongs.

"I'm s...sorry. Please don't be scared of me. I.. I promise to be good" Harry mumbled out.

Silence filled the room the only sound being his small whimpers of his crying.

"We aren't scared of you Harry, we were scared for you. Don't worry, Kim and Samantha are going to be back to normal before you know it. Just give them time. You'll see everything is going to be fine." Mitch whispered as he pulled Harry into a hug.

It took several minutes for Harry to calm down and then be re-tucked in by Mitch.

By the time Mitch had left the room Harry was calmed down immensely but thinking about Mitch's words.

He didn't think that everyone was just upset about him falling out of the tree. Although he was sure that was part of it. Thinking back he remembered the shocked looks he had gotten when he had landed on the ground. He also remembered how tall everyone had looked.

Closing his eyes he tried to remember what he had done and see if he could do it again. Clearing his mind like his mom had taught him he began to recreate whatever he had done in the first place. After concentrating for several moments he opened his eyes and looked around.... Nothing had happened.

Frowning he closed his eyes again and took several deep breaths. He felt a slight pull in his mind and began to follow it coming to a wall of flames. He saw a cat pacing in the flames before looking at him and beckoning to him to come. Once again he embraced the magic.

When he opened his eyes again he was shocked to see how much brighter the dark room was. Looking around curiously at where the light was coming from his eyes fell upon his bedside table and his glasses. But that wasn't possible since he had awful eyesight without his glasses on and yet he could see everything perfectly. Doing the only thing he could think of he gasped and reached his hand out to for his glasses.

Or he tried to gasp and instead it came out as a hiss as he lost his balance and fell over. Looking down at his hand he let out another hiss when he realized that where his hand should be was a paw.

Harry tried to scramble off of his bed to race to the mirror on his dresser to see what had happened only to fall over again. A little confused and getting very frustrated at each passing moment he once again stood up. This time he looked down at his feet trying to

understand what the problem was only to find instead of where his legs were suppose to be there were paws just like his hands.

He felt something swat him from behind and turned quickly to see what was there only to find nothing behind him. Feeling the same swatting motion behind him again he turned once more and only to find nothing. When it happened a third time he looked over his should instead of turning and found himself staring at a cat's tail..... That was attached to him.

Beginning to panic at the sight of the tail he closed his eyes and let out a small whimper that came out as a small mewling. However with his eyes closed he could distinctly see traces of his magic in his mind. Instinctively he began to follow the path until he was in front of the same blue light as before. Reaching out to it he felt his body begin to tingle and then just as suddenly it stopped.

Opening his eyes cautiously he took in the dark blurry room and then looked down at his hands. Seeing that they were hands he quickly looked behind him to see if he still had a tail. When he was very certain there was no tail attached to him. Harry finally allowed himself to relax.

He could turn into a cat.

Biting his lip he thought that over. He could turn into a cat at will. Whenever he wanted to he could change into a cat like Bagheera in the "The Jungle Book."

He could change into a cat. A Cat! Slowly Harry began to grin as the idea took root and what it meant.

Kicking of the covers he slid out of his bed and sat on the floor. Then closing his eyes he found the path the led him to the cat in the fire and embraced it.

He concentrated on the tingling sensation that ran through his body that made him feel so alive. When the sensation was over he once again took notice at how bright the dark room looked and how clear everything was. But this time he also noticed that could smell things

that he hadn't been able to smell before. His mom's perfume still lingered in his room as well as other scents that he didn't really know what they were or where they were coming from.

He could also hear sounds that hadn't been there before. He could distinctly hear the sounds of an owl far in the distance. The sounds of the night were almost intoxicating. They called to him to come and play. He could also hear his Mom in the kitchen talking to Kim and Mitch. He could hear Sam breathing loudly in the doorway; her breathing was only slightly louder than her heart beat.

Harry paused slightly at that thought and slowly looked toward the doorway where Sam stood in her blue nightgown clutching her doll to her chest as she looked down at him. He watched in amazement as green sparks seem to dance around her. He could feel her apprehension, her confusion, as well as her comprehension. It was her panic however that had his magic leaping up within him begging to be released. Before he could stop himself he let the magic go and watched in awe as the room filled with soothing colors. He let out a small purr of pleasure at the light show before him before looking back at Sam.

He watched as she slowly calmed down and began to relax so she no longer looked like she was going to run. After a couple of minutes passed with the two of them staring at each other Sam fully entered the room and closed the door. However she didn't make any other effort to come towards him.

Having had enough of this Harry tried to make his way over to her only to fall once again. Getting extremely frustrated at his lack of being able to move while being a cat he decided to change back to being himself. What was the point of being the king of the jungle if he couldn't even move? Before he could make the change however he heard a small snort from Sam. Looking over at her he hissed. After looking at him for a second she sat down and grinned.

"Well come on try again. It can't be all that difficult. Besides I've always wanted a pet" She whispered with a slight giggle. Letting out a small growl he stood up once again and began to learn to walk.

## Chapter 8

He sat motionless watching his prey from his hiding spot. All of his senses attuned to what was going on around him. His muscles were tensed and ready to spring in a moment's notice.

He watched his quarry come out of the house; slowly coming in his direction. She looked around her obviously searching for something or someone. Another cautious step forward followed by another getting closer and closer to where he watched from.

He held his breath and crouched down even further into the branches and continued to wait. She was now directly below him. She would only need to look up and she would see him.

He observed her turning around in a whole circle before heading back in the direction that she had come from.

His mind screamed now and he flew into action.

He silently jumped from the tree and stalked his prey keeping low to the ground but moving quickly. She paused in front of him and began to turn around but it was already too late for her. She wouldn't stand a chance.

Forgetting any need to be stealthy he pounced taking his prey to the ground with him. He heard a small scream from his quarry as she fell to the ground.

"Harry James!" A woman yelled from the house coming towards him in a hurry.

And suddenly the predator disappeared and in his place was a small eight year old looking sheepishly up at his mom.

"Get off me!" came Sam's voice from below him as she pushed him off of her. Rolling over Harry looked at Sam and continued to grin.

"I win!" he declared as he sat up and took in her disheveled look. She sneered at him before sitting up and pushing him back down.



“Hide and go seek was a lot more fair before you could turn into Tripsie”

He scowled slightly at the name she had given him when he had had so much trouble learning to walk as a cat.

“Maybe but it’s a lot more fun now.” Harry said cheerfully watching as she pushed her hair out of her face as she continued to sneer. As she continued to glare at him he held her gaze knowing what was going to occur. Yep, there it was, she was losing her control. Her sneer began to waver and she finally broke out into giggles.

He heard someone clearing their voice above him and he looked up at his mom glaring down at him.

“Harry! What have I said about climbing trees! Honestly, how many times am I going to have to tell you to stay out of that tree? You will not be getting dessert tonight and I mean it young man. Now the two of you go and get cleaned up for dinner.” His mom scowled down at him as he looked down at his hands.

“Someone got in trouble” Sam chanted under her breath just loud enough for him to hear.

“Yes mom” he mumbled. Harry looked at Sam for a moment and scowled at her as she smiled sweetly back at him.

His scowl left quickly however and was replaced with a grin that his mother often called his Marauder smile. Although he wasn’t all that sure what that meant.

“Race you” He said with a quick glance at Sam before turning back into a cat. He distantly heard Sam yell out “Not fair” before he called up some of the magic that surrounded the cat. He felt the flames wash over his body making him feel alive and he brought up a picture of what the kitchen looked like into his mind. He pushed his magic towards the picture in his mind and felt the magic begin to rush towards the kitchen.

With a burst of flames he left the backyard and arrived into the kitchen. There was a slight gasp from someone in the room but he ignored it. Racing to the kitchen sink he washed his hands and raced to the table and sat down. He looked at the head of the table and saw Mitch smirk slightly at him while shaking his head. Kim who was at the kitchen counter was holding her chest but smiled at him. She had the most trouble with him flaming in and out of rooms.

He heard the back door open and he turned to watch Sam race into the room and scowl at him as he smiled back at her again. Behind Sam was his mom who was trying to look stern but a small grin graced her lips.

### POV Change

Mitch sat at the kitchen table reading the paper as Kim finished preparing dinner. Throughout the years there had been more and more reports of people dieing for unknown reasons and of terrorist attacks. It had become nearly impossible to open the paper and not read about another death or another family disappearing without any signs.

Today's paper was no different other then fact that the house that had been attacked was very near to where they currently lived. Sighing he read how the deaths of the four people in the house were currently unknown and investigators were working to find out some answers. It was the same response as always.

A ball of dread filled his stomach as he looked at the picture of the house the reporter had taken. He could faintly see the Dark Mark floating above it having faded slightly since the attack had taken place. It was not the first time the paper had actually taken a picture of the Dark Mark but it was rare that they got there in time to catch it. He had asked Kim once what she saw when she looked at a house with the Dark Mark and she had told him that it was just a house that gave her the creeps.

Last year Kim had finally seen what the Dark Mark looked like. Two Death Eaters had been killed at one of the attacks last year. They had attacked a family where the mother and father had been military

trained. They had taken two of their attackers down before being killed by unexplainable causes. There had been signs of torture on both of them but once again authorities had not been able to tell what had done the damage.

However it had been the first time that the muggle authority had been given the proof they needed that these were attacks and not gas leaks or poisons. Journalists had reported that the only thing police had found near the two attackers were little sticks; no weapons could be found. The reporters had also shown a picture of the Dark Mark burned into the attackers' arms which police believed to be the symbol of the organization.

Mitch looked up from the paper and watched his wife move around the kitchen humming softly. Not for the first time he felt fear creep into his stomach at the thought that they could be attacked at any time in any place. Of course if Death Eaters did attack his family would have a little better chance than other muggle families. His family would at least know what was going on and had a witch to fight back with. However Mitch was anything but naïve. If Death Eaters did attack them they would still have very little chance of surviving.

Hearing the kitchen door open and close Mitch looked out the window and saw his daughter. Samantha was cautiously walking around the perimeter of the backyard searching for something. The paper forgotten for the moment he snorted slightly and turned fully in his seat to watch what was inevitably going to happen.

Sure enough as soon as his daughter turned around and began to head back to the house a large cat dropped from the tree.

"Merlin! That child is going to be the death of me. Honestly!" Lily muttered behind him before taking off out the door.

He supposed most fathers might be worried at the sight of a rather large cat stalking their only child. Of course most fathers would also have a reason to be worried. For him watching his daughter and Harry play these games was rather amusing.

His eyes wandered over the cat. It always amazed him seeing Harry in this form. The cat screamed power, grace and tranquility all at one time. Magic seemed to just ooze off of him.

Tuning his attention back to his daughter he let a rare grin spread over his face. She was slowing her pace down and her eyes were widening with realization. Yup she was just remembering the tree now and that she hadn't looked up. Within seconds she was on the ground and Harry was on top of her as a boy again laughing.

His eyes drifted down to the paper and the picture with the Dark Mark before looking back at the children. His gut clenched again at the thought of the children meeting such an awful fate. He considered both of them his now and had for many years. Samantha was his daughter and Harry was his son even if he wasn't biologically his father.

Generations of Snapes and Potters would be rolling in their graves with that thought. There had been a feud between the two families for so long that no one could even remember when it had started. But that did not matter to Mitch any longer. There had to be a way to protect his children.

He couldn't stand the idea of them not being able to defend themselves long enough to escape any threat. He wasn't as worried about Harry since Harry would be able to use magic to protect himself but Samantha had absolutely no way to defend herself. No way to escape if she needed to.

He could only think of one thing that he could teach Samantha; a skill that had been passed down through each generation of his family. His father had taught him when he had been young so that if someone had attacked the family he would be able to fight back. His mind drifted back to lessons he had many years ago with his own father and sighed. They were bitter sweet memories.

Kim would absolutely hate it... but what she didn't know.....

A burst of flame in front of him had Mitch look up and smile slightly at a disheveled Harry.

Yes, Harry would be fine if there was an attack. He would drill into Harry's head that if there was any trouble he should just turn into the cat and flame away to a certain location that the family could pick him up at later. Mitch frowned knowing that it was most likely there would be no one alive to pick him up. He would have to make sure the place that Harry went would have people around that could help Harry if the family did die.

The door burst open as Samantha stormed into the kitchen. He watched his daughter fondly as she grumbled under her breath and stomped her feet over to the sink. His little drama queen. Every other stomp she turned her head to glare over at Harry who smiled cheekily. His wife ran a hand threw Samantha's hair as she passed by her carrying plates to the table.

He let his eyes drift down to the picture again then back up to Samantha. He had to at least try and give her a fighting chance to survive. He knew Kim would never take the time to learn how to defend herself especially with something that was dangerous. Kim believed that there was no situation that violence was needed. Violence begot violence in her opinion. No mater how many times he and Lily had tried to convince her that Death Eaters were ruthless she refused to believe that they would hurt an unarmed woman and children.

His heart hurt at the thought of Kim not doing anything to defend herself but he pushed the thought out of his head. He had to concentrate on Samantha. He would do everything in his power to keep her safe.

He looked around the table watching as Lily lectured Harry and Samantha about throwing peas at each other at the dinner table again as Kim tried to fight off her laughter. It was a very typical dinner at their house.

He stood up to get rid of the paper and let is eyes fall one last time on the picture before returning to the table to his family. However no mater what antics the kids got up to he could not join into the laughter that surrounded the table. A feeling of dread was draped around him

and no matter what he did he could not shake it. Because he was sure that it was only a matter of time before his family saw the Dark Mark again.

### POV Change

“Try again Samantha” she heard her father say beside her. She glared up at him as he smiled down at her with encouragement.

When her father had said he wanted to do something together just the two of them she had been ecstatic. While her and her dad did play together all the time it was very rarely just the two of them. Normally when her father played with her it was with the whole family.

When he had first mentioned it she had pictured her father and her going to the zoo and seeing the zebra's again. If not that she had pictured her father and her getting dressed up to go to the ballet that her friend Hailey had seen. Or even better going horseback riding like Jessica did with her father.

Transferring her glare down at the small knife in her hand she snorted.

She had not pictured them going to a field in the middle of nowhere and throwing knives around. This was the sort of thing that Harry might like but she was not finding any joy in it all.

“Daddy can't we go home yet?” she whined miserably.

“Just a little longer Sam, this is a tradition in our family. For many generations the Carlsons' have taught their children how to defend themselves.” She looked at her father pouting slightly hoping that he would change his mind.

“Dad....” She whined a little louder. They had been out here several times now doing the same thing over and over and she was bored.

Sam knew she could put a stop to the whole thing by telling her mom what dad was teaching her. Her mother hated any kind of violence; she wouldn't even let Harry or her watch the telenovela without first watching the show to make sure that it was suitable. However if she

told her mom then she wouldn't be able to make Harry jealous every time her dad took her out just the two of them.

"Please Sam" startled by the odd tone in his voice she looked back up at her father.

He was staring down at her with a look that she had never seen him give her before. While she didn't understand what it was he was thinking her nine year old mind could tell that this was very important to her dad that she learned this skill.

Turning back to the target that her father had set up she wrinkled her nose. Placing her feet the way her dad had showed her she brought her arm up and tried again to throw the knife at the target. However as she released the knife it slipped slightly and cut her hand. Letting out a small cry she brought her hand to her chest and fell to the ground in tears.

"I hate this! I hate this! I hate this! Why do I have to learn to throw a stupid knife Daddy? Why?" She cried rocking herself slowly back and forth clutching her hand. She looked up at her father who was staring down at her in distress before he finally sat down beside her and gathered her onto his lap.

"I hate this! Why can't we go and do something fun. It's not fair!" She cried into his chest as he rocked her back and forth.

"Let me see your hand" He whispered softly after a few moments of rocking her.

She held out her hand and watched through her tears as he slowly bandaged the small cut.

"I don't want to do this any more dad. Why do I have to learn to defend myself? Won't you be there to take care of me?" Sam whispered softly.

After a few moments of silence she looked up at her father to see him staring down at her in anguish. He looked as if he wanted to say

something but couldn't quite decide whether or not he should. After a few moments he finally seemed to come to a decision.

"Always" he finally whispered back to her as he squeezed his arms around her.

She burrowed deeper into his hug thankful she wouldn't have to pick up one of those stupid knives again.

### Authors Note

If anyone has any ideas on what to call Harry when he is a cat please let me know. I just can't seem to think of anything and it has been driving me crazy.

I'll try to go a little more in-depth in later chapters on what having the two magical cores means for Harry.

This story will probably speed up from here and start becoming a little more action paced... hopefully. The next chapter will have James POV and what has been going on in the wizarding world. Thanks for reading.



## Chapter 9

James walked through the make shift village just outside Hogwarts. He made his way around the bright colored tents occasionally having to change direction in order to avoid being run down by the children racing around.

It always amazed him when he walked through this area how happy the children seemed to be. There were of course a couple that sat away from the other children looking sad but he knew from experience that it would only be a matter of time before those children joined the others in their games. They seemed to adapt so quickly to their new lives that it was almost mind boggling.

The adults that now lived in this tent village on the other hand watched him with wary eyes. He knew they were waiting for him to turn his wand on them as they stood unable to defend themselves. They could not and would not accept the change that their lives had gone through as easily as their children.

Shaking his head of these thoughts he continued to make his way to the center of the camp which had once been one of his own childhood haunts.

The Shrieking Shack. Of course it was no longer called that. Instead it now held a new name of Hogwarts refugee base. The small house that Remus had once transformed in and were the Marauders had later used as the place to plan their pranks and become animagus was no more. The Shrieking Shack had been filled with many positive memories as well as many horrible ones. Remus had once called the place hell and heaven all wrapped into one.

Reaching the building he opened the door and allowed himself a moment to take in the changes that had occurred inside.

Gone were the scratches on the walls from a werewolf's claws and the trashed furniture. Instead of the rather depressing setting now was a bright airy place. Like the tents outside the house had been made to be larger on the inside then it appeared on the outside. The

building had been separated into four parts; the supply room, the hospital, the kitchen and finally the orphanage.

Hogwarts refugee camp had only been open for three years. It had started out small but had grown in size rapidly.

Walking through the halls of the base he made a quick left and walked through a magical screen. Shuddering slightly at the feel of his magic being judged he waited for Hogwarts wards to allow him entry. After what seemed like hours the wards shifted slightly and he made his way through the passageway that would take him to Hogwarts.

It hadn't always been this way. In fact when the attacks on the muggle-borns and half-bloods had started to progress six years ago the Order of the Phoenix had tried to make sure the children and their families could stay in their homes. Order members that worked at the ministry would keep an eye on the accidental magic chart and wait for some to occur in muggle London.

When the accidental magic had happen a small group of Order members would travel to the address and put up wards and set an alarm at headquarters that would go off if the family was attacked. The Order would put up the wards and leave without telling the family what was going on in hopes that they wouldn't worry and the children would be able to keep their innocents and part of their heritage.

It worked at first. Death Eater attacks had slowed down and the Order felt confident that their wards would hold. They had some of the best ward builders and only those who worked on the wards new how to disable them.

James sighed slightly as he made his way to the end of the tunnel and pushed a button to disable the Whomping Willow. He stepped outside and through another magical screen that checked him for dark magic.

Merlin, when had life come to this? But then again he knew when life had become this. He still had nightmares of that night.

Shuddering again he let his mind take him back to the night three years ago that the war had seemed to escalate. The sounds of the alarms at headquarters had been devastatingly loud. Even Sirius who could sleep through ice cold water being dumped on him had jumped out of bed at the sound the alarms going off.

Twenty five houses had been attacked at once and the wards had torn apart like they had been nothing but wrapping paper on presents.

Order members had raced out and had been sent to certain houses. Minerva had even contacted the ministry to request back up before she had raced out to fight. Even with everyone fighting the Order hadn't been able to go to eight houses.

By the time they had arrived the battle was almost done. The muggle families hadn't stood a chance. They hadn't even known what was going on.

There had been seven survivors in all that night; six children and one teenager. There had been over sixty casualties.

The only reason there had been even that many survivors was because of the children's accidental magic had kicked in buying them a few moments as well as the fact their parents and older siblings had tried to save them and died first giving the Order a few precious minutes to arrive.

Those six children became Hogwarts first orphans.

The traitor had struck again. They still had know idea who the spy was but there was no denying that the only way that Voldemort could have gotten through the wards was if he had been given inside information that only the ward builders had known. They still didn't know how the traitor had gathered his information.

After that night the race began.

Since Minerva and Filius taught subjects that allowed them to work with every student that ever walked through Hogwarts doors they were recruited to go through the Hogwarts book and look for new

names and names of children from their graduated muggle-borns. Once one of these names was spotted a team of Order members would be dispatched to their home and would discuss with them what was going on and the family's options.

Most ignored their warnings but accepted a Portkey and the wards. Usually the lucky families would lose somebody before the rest of the family was able to get to the Portkey and escape a few days later when they were attacked. Normally these families would die. Other families decided that they would move to another country. Very few came directly to Hogwarts seeking refuge. The camp was mostly filled with mixed families who understood the danger and knew that Hogwarts was the safest place.

However even using Hogwarts book there were still times that Voldemort's Death Eaters would find the families first.

Rumors circulated through wizarding Britain on how Voldemort was able to locate the families so fast. The rumors stretched from Voldemort being so powerful that he was able to feel magic from a great distance and locate even the smallest amount done. Too rumors of Voldemort having special tracking devices that were similar to the ones in the ministry created centuries ago.

James tended to lean towards the second option; it also didn't help that there was a traitor. But James had seen first hand what a remarkably clever witch or wizard could do by modifying a spell. He had watched Lily enough times manipulating charms to know that it was possible.

Almost at Hogwarts now James picked up his pace before coming to a dead stop at the greenhouse at the sound of voices.

Peering in he grinned slightly at the sight of Neville covered from head to toe with dirt but the grin slowly slid off his face at the sound of Frank and Alice fighting.

"Damn it Neville! Leave the plants alone." He could hear Frank growl.

“Frank leave him be, he’s just having a little fun!” Alice replied stepping in front of Neville while leaving a hand on his head.

“Alice he doesn’t have time for this. Don’t you understand? Haven’t you been listening lately? Merlin! He hasn’t even shown that he has any magic yet” Frank retaliated as he turned around and began to pace.

James watched as Neville shrank back a little as tears filled the boy’s eyes.

“Frank Longbottom! Look at your son!” Alice roared at him.

Frank stopped his pacing and turned to glance at his son. He seemed to freeze at the sight of Neville edging away from him before he sighed and walked to Neville and picked him up murmuring something James couldn’t hear while looking at his wife. His face plainly spoke all of his emotions. He didn’t want his son to die.

“They at it again?” James jumped slightly at the sound of a familiar voice behind him before turning to greet Remus.

“Yeah, same fight as always” James replied and began to make his way towards Hogwarts again. Feeling a great amount of pity for the Longbottom’s; their son was being hunted, it didn’t help that the prophecy had been leaked to the press and now the wizarding world was looking towards their son to save them. They hadn’t been able to have more children because they didn’t want to raise another child while running and hiding and all the stress had put their marriage on very rocky grounds.

“I didn’t know you were coming tonight?” He asked Remus dragging his thoughts away from the Longbottoms. However like usual Remus didn’t answer him instead James received a slight shoulder shrug and a rather pitiful smile.

Glancing over at Remus he took in his haggard appearance. Even in their youth Remus had never appeared overly healthy but these days he looked near death. Remus had always been thin and pale but he was now so thin and pale that he almost looked like the walking dead.

Dark shadows under his eyes told the story of many sleepless nights. But one thing stayed the same about Remus from their youth; he was still full of secrets. No matter how awful he looked he always said he was fine. He never was around any more and when he was he always gave the same infuriating shrug and smile. If James ever asked right out where he had been Remus always found a way to change the subject so that James wouldn't even notice until hours later.

That was one of the main reasons that Sirius was so suspicious of Remus being the Order spy. Remus' bloody secrets. Remus was so damn closed mouthed lately that even James was beginning to believe that Sirius was right. But Hogwarts wards allowed Remus in and that had to mean something.

Silently he tried to convince himself this even as a small voice in the back of his mind whispered that wards could be tricked.

So the one time best friends made their way inside the school and towards the Order's Headquarters in silence.

POV Change

Try again fledgling

Harry looked up from his spot on the floor to the bird sitting comfortably on top of his dresser. In a bright flash the bird disappeared and Harry tried once again to follow him by following Bird's magical pattern. Catching a trace of the white aurora that he associated with Bird Harry closed his eyes and released his own magic attempting to follow.

They had been at this for weeks and Harry was only beginning to get it down so that he was actually accurate more than half the time. It was much more difficult to flame to someone by using their magical signature than it was to flame to a place that he had already been to.

He had of course tried to get out of learning it by telling Bird that it was too difficult but Bird was very persistent.

It had only been a week after he had first shifted into his other form that Bird had returned and had begun to teach him about his other form. How to listen to magic, how to feel magic and how to use it.

Magic while he was a cat was an entirely different experience. He didn't use magic the way he did as a boy. While wizards used magic that was stored inside them to do spells Harry as the cat used the magic around him to do things. For example if he wanted the door to open he simply asked the magic to open the door.

While Harry was a cat magic almost seemed to be alive which Bird had assured him it was. It was all around him beckoning him, encouraging him and playing with him. Magic had become one of his constant companions while he was a cat.

It was always disconcerting when he turned back into a person how lonely it felt. He could barely sense any of the magic that he knew was everywhere.

When he asked Bird why could only feel magic as a cat Bird had replied that his magical cores used magic differently and had left it at that.

Bird did that a lot, never truly answering a question he had. This was the reason that Harry called him Bird. When he had first asked Bird what his name was Bird had just laughed and replied that it depended on who you asked. Harry had hoped at the time that if he called it something truly annoying it would tell him its name. So he had begun calling it Bird. Nearly a year later and he was still calling him Bird.

Fledgling pay attention.

Harry looked up at Bird who now stood on a chair. Taking a quick stock of his surroundings Harry realized that he was in the dining room and that he had successfully followed Bird and not landed on top of him as he had done several times.

Well if you can now follow me without having to concentrate let us try again. This time let us go somewhere you have never been.

Anticipation flowed through him at the thought of taking the game of follow the leader to the next level. So far Harry had only followed Bird around the house. Excited his tail shifted back and forth rapidly.

Now fledgling this is the same as what we have been doing but you are going to have follow my magic further. This means the signature is going to be fainter. Remember to check the surroundings before you appear somewhere. Listen to the magic around you to make sure it is safe for you to appear. If you can't find me what are you suppose to do?

Come back here and wait for you. He replied eager to try and determined not to fail.

Try not thinking about it so hard. Trust what the magic is telling you, trust your instincts. You are part of the magic and it will not steer you wrong. With that last bit of advice Bird disappeared again.

Harry took a deep breath and purred deeply. The hunt was on. Closing his eyes he began to search for Bird's magical signature. But there was nothing. Growling in frustration he opened his eyes and looked around the room as if there would be a hint of how to do this written on the wall.

Closing his eyes again he tried to stretch his magic to feel for Bird but once again came up short. His magic just wasn't able to reach as far as Bird had gone.

In a desperate attempt Harry began to feel the magic around the room hoping something would give him a hint. Nothing occurred again. Feeling depressed at his failure Harry silently asked himself where Bird could have gone. Suddenly there was a magical surge in the air and a picture of a castle came to his mind with the magic beckoning him to follow.

Startled Harry took a step backwards and bumped into a chair. He had felt magic around him many times and had listened to it before but he had never talked to it and had it answer. Trying again he silently sent his question of where was Bird to the magic. Once again the magic in the room flared and a picture of a castle came to his



mind. Deciding to do what Bird told him to do repeatedly Harry closed his eyes and followed the magic flaming away to a destination unknown.

## Chapter 10

Harry took in his surroundings with awe. A huge castle stood in front of him that looked like something right out of the movies that he watched with Sam. Trying to take it all in Harry began to turn in a complete circle noticing a large lake and forest behind him. Everywhere he looked there was something that caught his eye that he wanted to explore and examine.

The best part of it was the amount of magic in the air. While at home magic did seem to be alive but it was almost calm compared to the feeling of the magic here. Magic saturated the area seeming to ooze from everything from the ground to the castle. The magic was so easy to hear and understand.

At home he had to concentrate quite hard to understand what the magic wanted. He could do small bits of magic by manipulating the magic around him. Here however the magic was practically screaming at him. He could feel the magic telling him that this was Hogwarts a place of sanctuary and learning. The magic was so dense that it was able to manipulate itself to make things happen.

Harry watched as magic picked up a leaf and began to taunt him with it by bring it close to him then darting it out of his reach. Seeing the game Harry immediately tried to pounce on the leaf only to miss as it was pulled away just out of reach.

Enjoying the chase Harry stopped paying attention to his surroundings and concentrated only on catching the leaf. After chasing the leaf for several minutes the leaf suddenly stopped and fell gracefully to the ground.

Seeing his chance he pounced on the leaf. Expecting the leaf to once again be pulled away he was shocked to find that he had actually caught the leaf. Batting at the leaf several times he tried to get the game going again only stopping when it became apparent that the game was over. Looking up Harry once again took in his surroundings only to find that he had moved away from the castle and now stood by a building made of glass and filled with plants. He turned to go back to the castle to explore only to stop at the sound of

people yelling catching his attention. Curiosity getting the better of him Harry snuck around the building towards the door of the greenhouse in time to see two men walking away towards the castle.

Taking his chance Harry stalked towards the door and gave push of magic towards the door to open it wide enough for him to sneak in only to find himself fully exposed to anyone in the room. Looking fearfully around Harry hoped that he hadn't been spotted however the only people in the room where a man and a woman who where too engrossed in their own conversation to have noticed him come in.

"Frank we'll discuss this later the meeting is about to start. Just please try and remember that he is still only a child."

Keeping an eye on the woman who was talking he began to try and make his way to the side of the room which was filled with plants that he could hide in. Hearing a sigh from the male Harry transferred his eyes to him.

"We should be on our way come along Neville.... Where did Neville go?" Much to Harry's horror the man began to turn in his direction where he was currently out in the open.

Forgetting about trying to be stealthy Harry took a leap into the plants and prayed that he hadn't been seen.

Closing his eyes Harry strained his ears and concentrated on the magic in the room to try and decipher if he had been seen when something touched his back. Jumping around he stared wide eyed at a large moving plant that looked very much like his Venus Fly trap. Harry shuffled back as the plant began to move towards him quickly only to have to jump to the side as the plant lunged hitting the spot he had just vacated. Fear filled him as the plant changed directions and came at him again. Jumping again to get out of the way of the plant Harry hissed slightly. He was the king of jungle and this stupid little... well rather large plant was not going to get the best of him. The hair on the back of his neck went up and he felt his claws come out as he prepared for the attack. If this plant wanted a fight it was going to get one. The next time the plant snapped at him he took a swipe at it and hissed while pushing magic towards it trying to intimidate it.

To his amazement the plant receded back quickly as if it was deathly afraid of him. Not wanting to take a chance he backed away from the plant slowly in case it was attracted to fast movements.

A quiet gasp stopped his retreat and had him jumping around again this time with his claws already out ready to attack another of the mutant plants.

Only instead of a gigantic plant there was a boy around his age hiding under a table. The boy was slightly on the chubby side and had light brown hair. Although the boy was covered in dirt Harry could see that he was going pale very quickly with his mouth wide open. A small whimper came from the boy as brown wide eyes stared into his green eyes.

Harry could still hear the man and woman calling for Neville so he could only assume that the boy in front of him was Neville. The only thing that Harry could really concentrate on however was Neville's emotions. Waves of fear and despair were rolling off Neville making Harry feel sick. The pale green magic that surrounded Neville flickered with these emotions.

Without even thinking Harry began to manipulate the magic surrounding Neville to even out the pale green pulses knowing that this would calm the boy down. He had done this many times before with Sam after she had a nightmare. And like it did with Sam, Neville began to calm down. As Neville calmed down the magic in the room began to form a light show causing Harry to purr with pleasure. He watched as Neville leaned forward towards him and tentatively moved his hand to give him a pet.

The cat loved to be scratched behind his ears much to Harry's embarrassment but the animal instinct took over and Harry bumped his head into the out reached hand making Neville giggle.

"Neville come out here now!" The woman's panicked voice called out loudly sounding near to the place he and Neville hid. Harry jerked back from the pat and glanced fearfully towards where the voice had come from only to see the plants being pushed aside.

Quickly glancing back at his new friend Harry flamed away letting magic guide him to wherever it thought best. He disappeared just as the plants were pushed aside leaving Neville staring wide eyed again at the place he had occupied.

### POV Change

"Has anyone seen Harry?" Lily called as she raced down the hall frantically getting ready to go to work.

"Isn't he in his room?" Kim called somewhere from the first floor.

Lily rolled her eyes at that suggestion. His room had been the first place she had checked ten minutes ago when she had first started to look for him to say goodbye too. Turning back around Lily made her way down the hall again and looked into his room only to find it still empty.

The problem with having a child that could turn into a cat at will was that it made said child very difficult to find when he decided it would be fun. The fact that said child turned cat could also use magic to move around the house with a blink of an eye did not help either.

Fighting down the panic that she still couldn't find her son she made her way across the hall to the one person that always seemed to know where Harry was. Smiling at the large princess sign on the outside of the closed door Lily knocked before entering the room. Sam as expected was sitting on the floor in her bedroom playing with her dolls.

"Sammy, do you know where Harry is?"

"He's with Bird" came a nonchalant reply from the little girl before her.

"But where is Harry?" Lily asked trying to bite back the frustration she was feeling while taking a quick glance down at her watch. She truly did not have time for this.

"I told you with Bird" Sam said as she looked up at her with a mischievous grin. Knowing that look Lily felt her heart begin to race. She had been right Samantha knew something.

"And where would Bird be?"

"Hopefully with Harry" Frustration rising to new levels Lily tried to calm herself by letting out a slow breath. When that didn't work she tried again. All the while the little imp in-front of her grinned obviously enjoying knowing whatever secret she knew.

"Samantha that is enough! Now where is Harry and Bird right now" She said sternly while using the stare that only a mother could use. Sure enough the little girl began to squirm.

"Fine! There not here" Sam huffed and turned back to her dolls.

Closing her eyes she counted to ten, praying for patience.

"Samantha, I can see that Bird and Harry are not here but where are they in the house?"

Sam turned back to look up at her and smiled hugely as if some great joke was on the way. Something in the way that Sam was looking at her had Lily pause as her heart began to clench in fear.

"Sam they are in the house right? Or at least in the backyard?"

Still smiling widely Sam shook her head as her dark eyes sparkled madly. With that one small gesture Lily felt her heart drop.

"Harry said that Bird was going to try and teach him to flame farther if he did well today." Sam practically sang out as she turned back to her dolls once more.

Lily slowly edged her way out of the room in complete shock. She had absolutely no idea where her son was, none what so ever. She had to be the world's worst mother to not have a clue that her son was missing let alone where to even look for him.

Slowly trudging down the stairs her mind whirled with possibilities. At least she knew that Bird would take care of him... What the hell was she thinking? A bird was in charge of her son's safety. When she got her hands on that bloody flaming chicken she was going to wring its neck. She would show that damn bird her wraith. If it thought it had any right to take her son out of the house without her say so then it had another thing coming. She would show it why Lily Evans had been the one person the Maurders had been afraid of in school.

And when she got done with the bird she would lay down the rules to her son that he was not to leave the house with a bird as his adult. After which she would ground him for the rest of his life for putting her through this.

"Lily are you okay?" she jerked out of her furry slightly at the gentle hand placed on her shoulder. Focusing her eyes she saw Kim in-front of her looking a little worried.

"The damn parrot has taken my son out to God only knows where" She fumed.

Kim looked at her confused for a moment until she seemed to work out exactly what Lily was saying. Kim's eyes became wide and mouth dropped slightly in shock.

Still fuming with anger Lily looked down at her watch and groaned. She was tempted to call in sick to work and wait home for Harry and Bird to arrive but she needed the money. Harry's glasses were no longer the right prescription and he was going to need new ones very soon. And as much as she hated to admit it Bird would keep Harry safe and her son wasn't exactly the most helpless child out there.

Although Harry was still going to be grounded for life.

"I have to go to work. Call me as soon as Harry arrives home." She sighed as she walked towards the front door.

"I will. I'll also send him straight to his room" Kim called after her.

Looking over her shoulder she gave Kim a grateful smile. Out of the corner of her eye she caught Mitch staring out the window pensively. As if felling her stare he turned and looked back at her. His eyes seemed to be filled with unease. She was about to stop to ask what was the matter when the alarm on her watch went off warning her that if she didn't leave now she would be late.

Swearing slightly she raced out the door.

"Lily" Mitch called from behind her.

Turning she looked back at him as she began to get into her car.

"We have to talk when you get back." He said from the doorway. He looked up at the late evening sun then turned back into the house.

A feeling of unease washed over her and once again she considered going inside to find out what was the matter. Her thoughts were interrupted by the frantic beep of her alarm. Swearing loudly she closed the car door and started the car.

POV Change

Harry quickly spread his magic around the room that magic had lead him too checking for any danger or people in the area before he finished flaming into the room.

After having been attacked by a plant in the last building that he had been in Harry nervously took in his surroundings. The room he was in wasn't very large. There were no doors into the room or windows which should have made the room very dark however magic seemed to fill the room densely making it very bright. A small bed was off to one side of the room and a desk on the other. Beside the desk a small book shelf stood. On the stone walls were several paintings of animals. Taking a quick look around to make sure that there was definitely no one around or able to get in Harry quickly shifted back to being human.

Feeling a pull towards the paintings he walked towards one of a golden horse. Taking a closer look he gasped as he noted to horse



seemed to be on fire. Golden flames seemed to flicker around the horse. He was sure that if the picture actually moved that flames would spark around the creature.

Turning to the next picture he found that each animal that he came across seemed to be surrounded in flames of different colors. He was currently looking at a large grey wolf that had its head turned up frozen in a howl. Once again he could see the faint outline of grey flames. Moving to the next picture his mouth dropped. It was Bird. The picture showed bird in mid flight. His wings were fully extended and his head up as if he was in the middle of a song. Mesmerized by the picture he reached out and let his fingers run over it.

He stared at the picture of Bird for awhile before he gave a small jump. Bird! He was supposed to be looking for Bird.

Quickly turning back into a cat Harry reached his magic out to find Bird. He gave a small purr as he felt magic help him locate Bird and without further thought he flamed away towards Bird.

When he flamed into the room right beside Bird and pounced only letting out a startled mew when he noticed that the room wasn't empty.

## POV Change

James sat slumped in his chair at the back of the room. He had only been half listening to what was being said around him. The order meetings very rarely had any useful information said in them. For the most part the meetings tended to be just updates on peoples assignments and rumors that were going around. With a traitor in their midst it was just too dangerous to actually say anything important at the meetings.

So James sat in the back like he always did and kept watch over everyone else trying to read the other people in hopes that he would be able to find the spy.

A large table was in the room which most people sat around. These people had a tendency to do the most talking. They needed to feel

like they were doing their part against Voldemort. However there were others like him who sat on the outskirts and only spoke when they needed too.

He glanced over to one such person who stood leaning against the wall across the room. As if sensing he was being watched, which he probably had, Mad Eye Moody looked up at him. They stared at each other for a moment before Moody gave a slight shake of his head and looking back around the room to the other occupants. They were both looking for the same thing, the enemy in their midst, and they knew it.

He let his eyes fall on Remus who was sitting very relaxed in one of the chairs at the table. He never said very much at the meetings and to anyone that didn't know him you would almost think that he was barely listening. However having known Remus for nearly two decades now James could tell that he was listening intently to everything that was being said and also watching everyone around him cautiously.

To Remus' right Peter sat shifting constantly in his chair. Every few moments he would check his watch while trying to be sneaky about it. However there wasn't a sneaky bone in Peter's body, he had never been very good at hiding his thoughts. That thought almost brought a smile to James face as his mind raced through all the times that Peter had stood in-front of a teacher and had shifted from foot to foot while stumbling over his words trying to make up an excuse when they all got caught in one of their many pranks.

Peter seemed to freeze for a moment and then his head shot up and looked directly into James eyes. As Peter shifted again James lifted an eyebrow causing Peter to blush. Holding back a snicker James began to turn his gaze away when something about Peter caught his eye. Something had been off. Turning back to look directly at Peter he found that his friend had already turned back to listen to whatever Dumbledore was saying. Shaking his head slightly he turned away from Peter again and resumed watching the others.

He took a quick glance beside him where Sirius sat and saw that his friend was doing what he always did; he was studying Remus with a frown.

He let his eyes wander to Remus once more before looking towards Dumbledore. Dumbledore sat at the head of the table listening to a report that Bill Weasley was giving him from the Goblins, who were very insistent that they would be staying neutral in the war. No amount of persuading had been able to change the Goblin leaders' decision which might be a good thing since Voldemort had not been able to persuade them either.

To Dumbledores right was Fawkes sitting on a perch that Dumbledore kept in the room in case Fawkes decided to join them. The meetings usually went a lot smoother when Fawkes was in the room since he was able to keep tempers from flaring. The phoenix would usually sit in the room and almost fade into the background. Today though the bird was shifting on its perch very much like Peter was shifting on his seat.

Tearing his eyes away from the phoenix James tried to concentrate on what was being said knowing that Frank would want to know. The Longbottoms had taken Neville to see Madam Pomfrey quite worried that he had gotten into something in the Green House. Frank had come in at the beginning of the meeting to tell Dumbledore this. Apparently Neville had been quite pale and unresponsive for a moment and then had begun mumbling something about a cat on fire and fighting plants.

Neville truly was an odd child.

A sudden movement had James on his feet along with the other Order members. His wand was out before he could even process that his wand was pointed at the phoenix who had suddenly decided to fly across the room and land on the table.

The order members gave off various nervous laughs as they resumed their seats. Glancing towards Sirius he met his friend's eyes as they both sheepishly put away their wands and sat back down.

"Fawkes what has gotten into y..." Dumbledore began but never got to finish as a burst of flame appeared on the table causing most of the people at the table to jump back. James was up immediately

again with his wand trained on the fire. Out the corner of his eye he could see Sirius in the same position.

The flame died away quickly and in its place was a cat that was only slightly smaller than Sirius' animagus form Padfoot. The cat seemed to freeze for a moment as it looked around the room before it finally looked at Fawkes. At the sight of the bird the cat pounced which set off a chain of reactions.

Dumbledore lunged out of his seat calling out to his familiar even as he was raising his wand. James had not seen the old wizard move that fast in some time. Many of the order members that sat at the table scrambled out of the way falling over their chairs as they tried to scoot backwards. Moody who had been rushing forward tripped over one of the fallen order members falling himself and knocking into Dumbledore causing the spell he was shooting to go astray and hit Sirius who fell to the ground with the Stupefy. Fawkes leapt into the air causing the cat to miss. Before he could do anything Fawkes let out a few notes that almost sounded like chuckling.

The cat that had landed on the floor near him seemed to stop at the sound and look around the room at the destruction it had caused without even trying. The tail that had been twitching seemed to go down as the cat slowly backed away from the order members that were righting themselves up from the ground and getting their wands pointed at the intruder.

The cat finally backed his way into the corner and was watching them all very warily. Fawkes gave a few soothing notes before flying down to the floor by the cat much to everyone's surprise.

"Friend of yours, Fawkes?" Dumbledore seemingly having gotten over the terror of losing his long time companion asked cheerfully as he sat himself back down. Fawkes sang a few notes as if to confirm this to everyone causing most people to lower their wands. Moody's was of course still up.

Turning to Sirius he Ennervate his friend which seemed to draw the cat's attention. The cat looked up at him and tilted his head while

studying him. Large green eyes stared into hazel eyes. Something inside of him seemed to connect with the creature in-front of him.

“Lower you wand Moody” He snapped at the old Auror as an oddly protective urge surrounded him.

Still staring into the cats bright green eyes James could almost swear that the magic around the cat was shifting until Fawkes gave a loud chirp that was anything but friendly. Finally looking away from the cat James looked towards the phoenix who was chirping frantically at the cat who would hiss and meow back.

It was by far the oddest conversation that he had ever witnessed. Looking over at Dumbledore he saw the old wizard looked just as confused as the rest of them.

Feeling something hit his leg James looked down and quickly stumbled backwards. The cat had moved from the corner to his side so silently that James hadn't even noticed. The fact that he had only looked away from the cat for a moment meant the cat was also very fast. The cat once again batted at his leg as if trying to get his attention. Kneeling down he cautiously gave the cat a scratch behind its ears before sitting back in his seat only to have the cat jump onto his lap.

Startled he leaned back in the chair as the cat put its face right in his own as if studying every detail of him. A snicker from beside him had James turn towards Sirius who was laughing at his predicament. The cat also hearing the laughter turned to Sirius and looked at him causing Sirius to stop laughing and cautiously move away.

Sirius was not that fond of cats.

The cat having seemingly found a good place to sit lay down across him and although the cat was too large to fit completely on him the cat managed to sprawl out comfortably. Looking up helplessly his eyes locked onto Remus who was also laughing him and then on Peter who had moved across the room to get as far from the cat as possible.

“Well know that we’ve had a bit of excitement let us resume the meeting.” Dumbledore said as he cleared his throat gaining everyones attention.

The meeting continued however James could only concentrate on the cat on his lap who had gone limp and was purring quietly.

The meeting was just about done when Fawkes and the cat suddenly looked up. The cat on his lap went tense and hair on its back went up. The flames that flicked occasionally from the cat seemed to flare and James distantly wondered why he wasn’t getting burned. The cat let out a loud hiss and with a burst of flames it disappeared just like it had appeared.

The order members looked at each other in confusion but before anyone could comment a loud alarm went off.

Questions about the cat would have to wait.

A muggle born family was being attacked.

## Chapter 11

Mitch watched out the window constantly feeling uneasy. For the last several days he had had the constant feeling of dread. He had been weighing the options in his head for days of what he should do.

They had a good life here. Their daily routine worked wonderful and he hated the idea of up rooting the children. They had lived in this house longer then any other place.

He had been hoping that the feeling would go away, but it had only gotten progressively worse as the days went by. He had finally decided that he could no longer wait; the feeling was not going to go away. He had decided that he would talk to Lily and Kim when Lily got home from work.

Unfortunately, for the last hour the feeling had been growing worse until it was near painful. He had never felt this intense sense of dread before. Not even the night that Harry was born.

Scowling out the window Mitch went over his options. The problem was that he was no longer sure that that they had time to wait for Lily to return from work or for Harry to show up.

The sound of someone coming up behind him had Mitch turning around quickly only to find his wife standing at the bottom of the stairs. Kim stood looking at him with her hands on her hips. He let a small grin form on his face at the sight of his daughter standing on the stairs imitating her mother's actions.

"I honestly don't know how Lily keeps calm with a child like Harry" Kim said while worry leaked into her voice. Ignoring his daughter parroting Kim's words he walked over to Kim and wrapped his arms around her in an attempt to comfort her. Both Kim and he thought of Harry as their own son having had a hand in raising him. Mitch could tell that Kim was going crazy with worry at the moment for Harry.

While neither Lily nor Mitch were used to the fact that Harry could do everything he could, including disappear at a moments notice, they both took it better then Kim. Neither Lily nor he ever really worried

about Harry knowing that a Phoenix was taking care of him. They knew that Bird was watching over Harry and would protect him. Kim on the other hand was too new to the magical world to truly understand what a Phoenix could do and what it meant. Although neither Lily nor Mitch had discovered what it meant come to think of it.

They had scoured over every magical children book they could get their hands on, but had not found any reference of Harry's abilities or any mention of a Phoenix taking to a child like Bird had with Harry.

"Don't worry Kim, Bird will take care of him" Mitch said still trying to calm Kim down.

Another cold chill ran through his body causing him to turn his head and once again look out the window. There was still no sign of danger. Even as he tried to calm himself down he already knew it would be impossible. There was only one thing that would calm him down at this point.

"Mitch, listen to what you just said. A bird will look after him! Doesn't that sound even the slightest bit wrong to you? I don't understand you or Lily. It's a bird." Kim practically yelled bringing his attention back to his wife that he still held. Just by the tone she used he knew that she was reaching her limit of what she could handle. He winced slightly at what he was about to do as he ran a comforting hand up and down her back.

Looking up the stairs to where his daughter was watching them he knew he had come to a decision. He couldn't take a chance with their safety.

"Not a bird Kim, a Phoenix, and we are going to have to trust that it will take care of Harry." He stated as he released his grip on her and took a step away and towards Sam.

"Princess go grab Shelly and Prongs we are going to go see Aunt Lily at her work." He said as he ran an affectionate hand through Samantha's hair. He watched as his daughter's face lit up. He smiled softly as Sam gave a small squeal then turned and ran up the stairs to do as he asked.



Turning around he met Kim's look of confusion mixed with disapproval.

"Really Mitch, we can't go out so close to her bed time and we are most definitely not leaving without Harry." She said as she searched his eyes. "What's going on?" She practically whispered her question as worry once again spilled into her words.

Once again he wrapped Kim into a hug and ran his hand along her back trying to sooth away the worry and stress that was building up quickly. Even as he tried to calm his wife his eyes were glued to the window. He hated worrying her like this but he wouldn't take the chance with their safety.

They were going to have to trust Bird to take care of Harry. He would deal with Kim's and Lily's anger later. His instincts were screaming at him to run now. He no longer had time to wait and hope that the feeling would disappear.

"Kim, pack a bag for Lily and us. I'll grab some clothes for the kids. Go as quickly as you can. We'll pickup Lily from her work and rent a hotel room somewhere away from here. Bird will bring Harry to wherever we are." He said the last part to try to both reassure Kim and himself. His mind raced over all of the problems that this move would cause but there was no other choice.

"Mitch we can't just leave our home. Just tell me what has you so nervous." Kim leaned back from his embrace to look into his eyes searching for the answers to her questions.

"Please trust me on this Kim. I could be jumping the gun and this could be nothing, but for at least tonight let's stay at a hotel away from here." He pleaded with her trying to portray the urgency he was feeling that was getting worse by the second.

Still searching his eyes Kim finally gave a very shaky nod. Before she moved out of his arms Mitch leaned down and gave her a quick kiss and then smiled down at her. Returning his smile Kim turned and went up the stairs to pack the bags as he had requested.

He took one last look around the living room. This place was their home. In his gut he knew that he had lied to Kim. They would never be back. Searching the room he looked for any sign of who they were but not a single picture lined the walls. For just this reason, in case they ever had to run. Anything that had sentimental value had been placed in a secure box at the bank. It had driven Kim crazy but she had understood that it was for their safety.

Seeing nothing that would give away their true identities he turned and followed Kim upstairs. Harry's room was the first door he came too. Quickly he went through Harry's dresser and grabbed enough clothes to last several days. Once again he scanned the room for anything that would give them away. Seeing nothing he made his way to Sam's room.

"Play with me daddy?" Samantha's voice called out causing him to pause and look over at his daughter. She was sitting on her bed playing with her favorite doll Shelly and Harry's favorite stuffed animal Prongs. She smiled up at him without a worry in her world. It still amazed him that he had helped create something as precious as her.

"Not now Samantha, we are going to be leaving soon. I'll come and get you when it's time to go." He replied as he moved to her dresser and filled the rest of the bag with her things. Moving to the bed he scanned her room like he had in Harry's and once again saw nothing. Standing over his daughter he ruffled her hair.

"Be ready in ten minutes okay" He said and watched as she grinned up at him and nodded. Smiling softly down at her he turned and left the room.

He moved through each room of the house systematically looking for any detail that would scream to wizards that a witch had lived here. Or any photos that would give away the fact that a Snape and a Potter had lived here but he found none. He was just finishing the kitchen when he heard Kim coming downstairs.

“All ready Mitch. I’ll go get...” Whatever Kim was about to say was cut off by a loud bang and then her screams. Mitch felt his heart stop, he had been too late they were under attack.

Moving as quickly as he could he raced to the living room where the sound of Kim’s screams were coming. Upon entering the room he came upon his worst nightmare. Kim was surrounded by five witches and wizards in black cloaks and white masks.

“Oh is the poor little muggle scared” A witch said as she pointed her wand at Kim and laughed.

“Let me give you a reason to be scared. Crucio!” The same witch yelled.

A bright light hit Kim sending her to the ground where she began to convulse and scream in pain. Acting on instinct that he didn’t know he had Mitch threw one of his throwing knives at the witch hurting his wife.

Much like Lily had begun to carry her wand around at all times Mitch had begun to carry his knives. He had never been more thankful then at this moment for that.

He didn’t hear the witch scream or notice her drop her wand as the blade went into her hand. He didn’t hear his own cry of rage as he threw the knife and then grabbed another knife. The only thing on his mind was protecting his family.

“Stupefy” Someone yelled behind him causing him to turn and throw another knife at his attacker. Even as he turned back to Kim he threw another knife at one of the wizards.

“Stupefy” The spell was yelled again but this time it hit him causing him to fall.

“Think your tough muggle well try this. Crucio!” The same woman screamed out rage in her voice at having been hurt by mere muggle. Unable to move Mitch watched the spell come towards him and prepared himself for the pain he knew would follow.

Memories of his childhood flashed through his mind as the spell came nearer. He could remember all the times that his parents and relatives had used this particular spell on him attempting to trigger his non-existent accidental magic.

It was only those experiences that kept him from screaming when the spell hit and pain filled his body. It felt like every nerve in his body was on fire. He could taste blood in his mouth as he bit his tongue to keep the screams in. He wouldn't give them the satisfaction.

Just like it started the pain stopped suddenly. Looking up from the floor he watched his attacker.

"Well, well, well it appears the muggle is tough after all. But I bet that it still hurt." She said between her giddy laughter.

She bent down so she was leaning right over him and removed her mask leaving a red stain on the white from her bloody hand. Crystal blue eyes raked over his face as her black wavy hair fell forward forming a curtain around them. He would have called her attractive except for her cruel smile and the insane look in her eyes.

Leaning closer she took a deep breath smelling him before leaning back slightly.

"Mmm I love the smell of fear, pain and blood. There is nothing quite like it" She said as she grinned down at him.

Struggling Mitch tried to break free of the curse in order to fight the wizards standing around him laughing but he could do nothing. Looking up his eyes caught movement at the top of the stairs.

His breath caught in his throat at the sight of Samantha standing at the banister clutching Shelly while staring down at them with tears streaming down her cheeks. He drank in the sight of her unharmed and thanked Kim's God for keeping Sam quite and unseen.

Movement directly above him caught his attention making him pull his gaze off of Sam and to the witch leaning over him.

He watched in horror as she began to look up obviously looking for whatever had caught his attention.

Knowing it was futile to try and break the spell he did the only thing he could think of to keep her attention on him in hopes that Sam would hide. Taking advantage of the women being close to his face he spat on her.

A deep sense of satisfaction ran through him as his bloody spit hit the woman in the face causing her to rear back and best of all direct her attention back to him.

He might not be able to save himself or Kim but he would do his damndest to buy his daughter time to get away or hide. Perhaps they would be lucky and help would arrive in time.

"How dare you!" The woman shrieked. "Think your so tough well" She mocked as she moved back.

He braced himself for more pain determined not to let her see his pain but she never pointed her wand at him. Instead her wand slowly moved to his side. Turning his head as far as he could his heart dropped. The witch's wand was pointed directly at Kim who was crying silently obviously having been spelled that way.

"Finite Incantatem" A wizard lazily said and the silencing spell was removed allowing Kim's cries to fill his ears. Once again he struggled against the spell as he stared into Kim's eyes.

"Very interesting... You seem to know what is going on. Is it possible that we don't have a muggle but a wizard in our midst?" A male voice asked to his right as he moved closer to study Mitch.

"No, not a wizard, you would have used your wand to defend yourself." The same man said as he studied Mitch intently. After a moment a slow smile spread across his mouth.

“Bella, love, I think we’ve got something worse than a muggle here.” The man said as he looked towards the woman who had paused while the man talked.

“I think what we have here is an abomination; a lowly squib.” The man spat out.

Even after years of not hearing that word it still caused Mitch to flinch slightly as the old wound was poked.

“Oh I do think your right Rodolphus” The woman all but purred back at the man.

“Well he obviously knows how to handle pain but he seemed awfully upset when we hurt the woman. What do you say love? Can I play with him?” Bella said in a child like voice even as she pointed her wand back on Kim.

“Crucio” The witch yelled and Kim’s screams followed echoed by his own. He struggled furiously trying to do anything to break the spell at the sound of Kim being tortured.

“Avada Kedavra” A green light shot from the doorway and Kim’s screams ceased.

Grief raced over him while he stared into Kim’s now lifeless eyes frozen in pain. Distantly he could hear someone talking and giving orders but the only thing he could focus on was Kim.

Cursing he bellowed his anguish but soon froze when he heard a scream coming from upstairs. The remaining wizards and witches whipped their heads up as did he only to see Sam still at the top of the stairs screaming.

“Another toy” Bella giggled with joy as she moved towards the stairs. “I love the screams children make.” She said sill laughing while she reached the first step.

Panic unlike anything he had ever felt ran through his body. He had failed to protect Kim and he was about to fail Samantha. A burst of

fire filled his gut and suddenly he was free from the spell. No longer bound by magic Mitch lunged for Bella while reaching for his last knife.

“Run Sam!” He yelled and prayed to whoever was listening that his child would stay alive. He lashed out with his knife attacking Bella only to have the blade plunge into Rodolphus who had moved in front of Bella to protect her. There was only a moment of satisfaction as the Rodolphus clutched his stomach and collapsed in pain. Raw instinct kept Mitch moving forward lashing out anyone who got close while he made his way to Bella who was now half way up the stairs. Bella had yet to see that the man she called love was lying on the floor.

Sam had stopped screaming and was now looking at him crying.

“Sam run!” He snapped causing her to jump and finally come out of her shock long enough for Sam to turn and run down the hall. He knew that there was no way for her to escape but he could give her enough time to hide. Having reached the stairs he felt hope fill him. There were no other Wizards now other than Bella.

“Petrificus totalus” The same flat voice that had used the killing curse called out behind him causing Mitch to once again fall to the ground.

Tears of frustration filled his eyes. Like a bucket of cold water had been dumped on him, the hope that he had been feeling washed away and he was once again filled with despair. He let the tears fall freely knowing that he had failed his precious daughter.

“I told you before Bellatrix we don’t have time for this.” The voice rang out as the man came over to him.

A head came into his line of vision. Mitch stared up at the white masked man with nothing but contempt. Meeting the man’s dark brown eyes he allowed all of his hate and disgust to show. The eyes behind the mask went from cold and indifferent to wide with surprise.

“Mitch” The man whispered in horror. Mitch felt his own eyes widen at hearing his name and studied the only thing he could see of the man, his eyes. Eyes that he knew very well, they were the same brown

eyes that stared back at him in the mirror every day and glittered with excitement on his daughter. They were the eyes that every Snape had including his brother Severus.

He watched as his little brother removed the white mask.

A scream rang out from upstairs and his heart began to break. Severus looked up sharply towards the stairs and Mitch watched as Severus' already pale face went several colors lighter. He watched helplessly as Severus hurried to the stairs obviously to help the child he now knew to be his niece. Before he could make it up the stairs however a child's scream filled the air and then all was quiet.

Mitch moaned at the pain he was feeling; his baby girl was dead.

"Mitch" Severus whispered then crouched down to be at Mitch's level.

"Finite Incantatem" He spoke after making sure that no other wizards were around.

"Mitch come on, I'll get you out of here but there isn't much time. Can you get up?" Severus whispered frantically.

"Just kill me Sev, you've already killed most of me just finish me off" Mitch moaned as he moved over to Kim to cradle her in his lap.

"I didn't know." Severus choked out. "Please Mitch there isn't much time for this. I can get you out of here but only if we leave now." Urgency filled his brother's voice.

Laughter rang out from the upstairs and began to approach them. Severus winced at the sound and the brothers looked at each other.

"Just do it Severus. You've become exactly like mom and dad so it shouldn't be all that difficult." Mitch sneered out still rocking back and forth with Kim in his lap. "They were innocent; all the people you kill are innocent. So do it already!" Mitch said hoarsely.

"The little muggle fought just like her father. It is so much fun when they fight back. But like all inferior species the strong survive." Bella



called out coming closer. Her words caused both of the brothers to wince this time.

Mitch watched as Severus picked up his wand with a shaky hand. The brothers' eyes were still locked onto each others and both shown with defeat.

"I am so sorry" Severus said as he tried to steady his wand while pointing it at Mitch.

"Don't be sorry Sev, fix it" Mitch croaked out and finally looked away from his little brother to look back at Kim. He cried for Kim, for Sam, and for what Severus had become.

"I don't know how" Severus replied with emotion as his hand finally steadied.

"Don't give me that. Find a way. Now do it!" Mitch said with anger while still staring at his wife.

"Avada Kedavra" Severus finally called out.

Mitch looked up at those words to watch the green light burst towards him.

He remembered the first time he met Kim, his wedding day, the first time he held his daughter, playing football with Harry, and talking with Lily.

He took comfort that Harry, a child he considered his own, would be safe.

He took comfort that he would be joining his wife and daughter.

And then he knew nothing.

## Chapter 12

"We're going to go see Aunt Lily at work Shelly. Harry's going to be so jealous. We'll have to get you dressed up so you'll be all pretty." Sam babbled to her doll after her father left her room.

"We'll get to stay up late, and have a pop and daddy even said that we were going to go away for a few days so we'll miss school" She said as she proceeded to dress her doll in her pink party dress.

"Doesn't that sound like fun Miss Prongs?" Sam asked as she turned to the stuffed deer which she had tied a blue bow around the collar and put a matching skirt on.

"Don't worry Miss Prong's Harry will be able to find us and if he can't then Bird will bring him to us." Sam spoke as she finished dressing her doll.

Having finished her important task of getting Shelly and Miss Prongs ready to go out Samantha looked at the clock at the side of her bed. She frowned slightly seeing that it was a little past the time her dad and said he would come get her. Getting up she moved towards the door holding Shelly only to stop when something out the window caught her eye.

Almost in a trance she moved towards the window to get a better look at the strange light that was above her neighbor's house. When she reached the window her mouth dropped open slightly and a cold chill ran down her spine. It wasn't just a green light that was above the neighbor's house but a sign; a rather spooky sign of a skull with a snake actually coming out the skulls mouth.

Sam began to step back from the window when she saw a green light flash on the opposite side of the street causing her to lean forward to get a better view. A person wearing a Halloween mask and robes stood outside of the house across the street pointing a wand like her Aunt Lily carried up at the sky. Looking up again she took note of the same sign across the street. Scanning the street she began to notice that the skull sign hung above several houses already. Looking down

again she saw that there was actually several people wearing Halloween costumes running around with wands out.

She took a startled step back when one of the masked people looked up towards her room. Whimpering slightly she turned back towards the door to find her father sure that something was wrong and he would fix it.

A loud crash downstairs had Sam jump then freeze in fear at the sound of a scream. She stared intently at her bedroom door too afraid to move and too afraid to stay in the room by herself.

After several moments of silence she moved towards the door again determined to find her dad so he could make everything better. Or she would find her mom who would hold her and tell her everything was all right.

“Come on Shelly let’s go find mom and daddy.” Sam said as she tightened her grip around her doll and grabbed the door handle.

A scream ripped through the house that had Sam once again freeze in terror. The screaming was coming from downstairs and didn’t seem to stop. Then just as suddenly as it had started it disappeared. The house was once again silent but this was just as scary as the scream.

Gathering her courage Sam opened her bedroom door and peeked out a small crack. Seeing nothing she opened the door farther and stuck her head out and looked cautiously both ways.

“Daddy?” She whispered softly. She was too afraid to call out louder in case whatever the monster was that caused that scream heard her. A loud roar came from the downstairs followed by more screams and bellows.

Once again Sam jumped at the noise and was about to scurry back into her room until she recognized her fathers voice among the many sounds coming from downstairs.

Cautiously she made her way to the banister making sure to skip over the squeaky board that Harry and her had discovered during one of their nights of trying to sneak downstairs for cookies.

Peering over the banister she gasped in surprise as she clutched Shelly in a death grip.

People like the ones she had seen out her window stood at the bottom of the stairs wearing the same dark cloaks and masks. Her parents were on the ground.

Her mom was on her side curled into herself while she appeared to be crying and gasping for air.

Her father was sprawled stiffly on his back looking at one of the Halloween people who was crouching over him.

Looking at the other Halloween people she saw two on the ground laying very still and another one holding his side as if in pain. Another one stood by the door looking at her dad and the woman. Even from where she stood she could see him smirking evilly.

Another man appeared at the doorway and said something before turning and leaving again. His cloak swooshed around him as he walked out of her sight.

Looking back at her dad she edged closer to the railing to try and get a better look at him. As she moved her dad suddenly looked past the person crouching over him and up at her. She watched her dad's eyes widen as they met her own. They stared at each other for a minute and then her dad broke eye contact with her.

Her mouth dropped open as she watched her dad spit on the woman who had removed her mask while leaning over him. She stared at her father in shock, she had never seen him do anything like that before and she was quite sure that if Harry or her ever did anything like that they would be grounded for life.

Something in the back of her mind was screaming at her that there was something she was suppose to be doing but she was too

entrapped in what was going on below her. It was like she was under water and everything was moving in slow motion. She could tell that the strangers were talking but she couldn't tell what they were saying.

Suddenly a bright light hit her mom and her mother started to scream. Her mom was withering on the floor and screaming while her father was hollering and cursing. The strangers in the room were watching her parents and laughing at their pain.

Sam let a small cry out but the noise that everyone else was making drowned her out.

Movement at the door caused Sam to look away from the scene below her to see that the same Halloween person that had left moments ago had returned. He entered the room again with his cloak gracefully dancing around him and said something sharply to the others. Then he pointed his wand at her mom and said something causing a green light to flash towards her mom. He said something again and turned and left.

She turned her gaze back towards her mom and felt her mouth go dry. Her mom was staring up at the ceiling unblinking. Inching even closer to the railing Sam held her breath and watched her mom waiting for her to move. Her mom didn't even blink.

"Mommy?" She whimpered then heard her dad bellowing.

"Mommy?" She said a little louder trying to get a response out of her mom. Still staring into her mom's unblinking eyes Sam clutched her doll closer to her. She didn't know what was going on but she knew something was wrong with her mom.

She distantly heard someone screaming and suddenly everyone was looking up at her. She watched in a daze as her dad started to yell at her and struggled on the ground. The woman who had removed her mask grinned at her and began to make her way towards the stairs. But Sam's eyes were drawn back to her mom's lifeless eyes staring up at her.

The voice in the back of her mind was now screaming at her but she still couldn't make out what it was saying.

Suddenly her dad was in motion with a knife in his hands. He was moving with incredible speed and taking a swipe with the knife at anyone who got too close to him. She started towards her father out of instinct knowing that he would protect her like always.

"Sam run!" Her dad snapped breaking her out of her daze and bringing her back to reality. Just like that she no longer felt submerged in water with everything moving slowly around her. Glancing away from the scene below her she looked at the woman who was at the middle of the stairway.

The voice that had been yelling in the back of her mind became clear. "If people with wands ever come at you Samantha run and hide. Don't stop for anything. If they point their wand at you get out of the way. Promise me Samantha." Her dad's voice rang out through her mind from having to listen to him tell her this at least once a week.

Seeing the woman was now almost at the top Sam turned and raced down the hallway to her room. Looking around wildly her eyes fell on her closet. Racing into the closet she closed the door then still clutching her doll she burrowed under her other toys like she did when Harry and her played hide and seek.

Sure that she was covered she tried to be as quiet as possible to listen for the monster.

"Oh isn't that sweet. Princess come out and play with me." A woman's voice cooed from in her room. Scared Sam inched back farther causing her to hit something sharp with her hand. Holding back a cry of pain she moved her hand carefully back until it hit sharp cool metal. Her heart jumped as she realized that these were the knives that her dad had tried to teach her to use but she had failed miserably at.

Clutching the knife like a life line she listened to the monster moving around her room saying things to try and lure her out.

The closet door swung open sharply and it took all of Sam's concentration to keep from moving or screaming. She could feel tears running down her face as she tried to control her breathing and heart rate. Unable to see the monster she could only hope that the monster would move on. After a moment it seemed to work because the monster moved away from the closet.

Letting out her breath she began to relax when the toys on top of her began to float.

"Peak-a-boo I see you Princess." The monster said as she grinned manically down at Sam.

Sam screamed and tried to back away but ran into the wall. Throwing her doll at the woman Sam lunged forward while still holding the knife. The monster was slightly shocked at the doll flying at her stumbled back a step allowing enough space for Sam to slip by.

Dashing towards the door again in hopes to get away a hand grabbed her from behind causing Sam to let out another scream. Struggling Sam twisted and turned trying to break the monsters grip. Sam began to kick and swing her arms trying to force her attacker to release her just like her mom had told her to do if anyone ever grabbed her.

She wanted freedom; she needed to get away from the monster. A fire raced through her for a moment and much to Sam's surprise the woman gasped in pain and released her.

Sam turned in time to see the monster holding her hand to her body and the sent of something burning filled the room. The monster looked up at Sam for a moment with shock in her eyes which quickly turned to anger. Sam watched in horror as the monster reached out to grab her again. Raising her hands she struck out towards the monster catching the monster by surprise again. The monster cried out in pain as the forgotten knife in Sam's hand sliced the monsters face.

The monster howled in pain and Sam took her chance and raced out of room and ran to the bathroom where she locked the door. Walking backwards she inched away from the locked door.

Tears ran down her face freely and she began to whimper in fear as she watched the lock slowly turn.

The door swung open and in the doorway stood the monster snarling at her. Anger burned in the monster's eyes as blood ran down her cheek and was dried on her hands.

"That wasn't very nice princess." The monster growled as she lifted her wand and pointing it directly at Sam.

Samantha screamed.

A flash of fire appeared just outside of the bathroom causing the monster to turn away from Sam. Trapped Sam could only move further backwards in fear. She searched around herself looking for a way out or weapon but there was nothing. She was truly trapped.

The monster gave a cry of fear causing Sam to look at her. Suddenly the monster was facing away from Sam and looking at whatever was just outside the bathroom door.

Sam trembled. What could scare a monster? This was most likely her chance to escape but was she safer in the bathroom with a somewhat known monster? Or should she take her chance with the thing that was frightening enough to scare the monster.

A low growl came from whatever was outside the bathroom and Sam felt her heart swell with hope. She knew that sound. Harry was here; she was no longer alone. The monster gave a small yelp and took a step back into the bathroom having obviously forgotten all about Sam.

Taking her chance Sam began to slide by the monster only to stop in shock when she saw Harry.

When Harry came into view Sam let out a small gasp of her own. Harry didn't look anything like he usually did when he was Tripsie. Normally he was really cute with black fur that had red tips. Tripsie's eyes were the same emerald green that Harry had that shown with his playfulness at all times.



At the moment however Tripsie looked down right scary. He looked larger than life all though he was no bigger than he usually was. His fur was still blacker than night but the red tips actually were on fire. When he growled the flames shot up a little bit making him look fierce.

It was his eyes that truly startled Sam. There was absolutely no sign of playfulness in them. His eyes remained the same emerald green but they were cold... deadly even. The cat in front of her was not the playful Tripsie kitten but a full grown predator. And he had his prey in his line of sight.

Tripsie stalked closer much like he did when he played with her but once again this was different. She couldn't even tell what was different with his movement but it was.

The monster grabbed Sam and held her in front of her using Sam as a shield. Sam trembled for a moment in fear before she looked into Tripsie's eyes. Instead of feeling fear at the cold look in his eyes she felt reassured. The monster didn't know what she was dealing with.

Tripsie began to circle them slowly looking for an opening to get at the monster but the monster was turning with him.

"What is it doing?" She heard the monster whisper above her obviously confused at why the beast hadn't attacked them yet. She felt the monster move her wand slightly causing it to face directly at Sam. Sam let out a whimper and Tripsie hissed causing the air to crackle with magic.

After a moment the monster gasped.

"It's trying to protect you." The monster whispered in amazement. "I can work with that." The monster said while she took her wand and aimed it purposely at Sam.

"Back away or I'll kill her like the muggles down stairs beast." The monster roared. Sam let out a small cry of fear and grief. Fear at the fact the wand was now digging into her side and sadness at hearing that her parents were actually dead.

Tripsie let out a fierce growl and looked at Sam for a moment. Then in a blink of an eye Tripsie disappeared in a flash of flames only to reappear on the monsters side. He pounced knocking both the monster and her over on to the ground. Sam let out a small cry of pain but knew immediately that she had to get away from the monster. Kicking furiously she shuffled on the floor away from the monster.

Looking back she saw Tripsie on top of the monster trying to claw and bite her. The monster fought until she got her wand pointed at Tripsie and suddenly he was flying to the side as the monster used magic on him to push him away. Her eyes widen as he hit the wall rather hard and fell to the ground in a lifeless heap.

"Tripsie" Sam cried out before looking back at the witch who was looking down at him.

"I'll take you back to my Lord. He will be very interested in you beast" The monster fumed before looking back at Sam.

"Now I'll finish you off princess. I think we've played more then enough." The monster snarled.

Sam watched in fear as the wand was once again pointed at her.

"Avada Kedavra" The monster screamed.

A flash of green light burst through the wand towards her. Before it could hit her however a flash of fire appeared in front of her and suddenly the fire surrounded her making her close her eyes.

She heard a faint scream and then she heard nothing.

Opening her eyes cautiously she looked around and was surprised to see that she was at the playground at her school. More specifically she was inside the playhouse on the school playground that her dad had always told Harry to go to if there was trouble.

Looking beside her, Sam felt her heart race at the sight of Tripsie swaying on his feet before collapsing unconscious. With a burst of light Harry appeared before her completely still.

“Harry?” She whimpered and moved towards him crying.

“Harry?” She tried again and began to shake him in fear. She grinned when she heard him moan slightly.

He was alive.

With that worry out of the way the events of the night crashed down on her causing her to finally let out her gut wrenching sobs.

She curled up against the unconscious Harry taking comfort in having at least someone in her family with her. She cried until exhaustion over came her and she feel asleep.

She didn’t even notice Bird appear to keep an eye on them.

POV Change

Harry looked at the man he was sitting on with astonishment. He looked exactly like the man in the pictures in his mother’s book. The man that his mother had told him was his father.

Harry glanced over at Bird again and sighed. He had really wanted to change back into his human form so he could ask the man if he was his dad. But Bird had been quite adamant that he could not do that. If he did he might even be taken away from his family and Harry did not want that.

So now he sat on the man’s lap studying him while he played with the man who smelled like a dog beside him.

Harry let out another purr of pleasure as the man scratched behind his ear. He batted away the hand from the dog man sitting beside him as the man tried to pull Harry’s tail again. The dog man kept snickering every time Harry missed his hand obviously enjoying the game just as much as Harry was.

Sam would laugh at him if she saw him actually sitting on someone and acting like a cat. It was hard to explain to her that being a cat was actually very natural for him. At times Harry felt it was more natural to be in his cat form than in his human form.

He was battling at the dog man again when suddenly the magic in the air sparked. He whipped his head up ignoring the people in the room as he listened to what magic was saying.

Listening as hard as he could he finally heard the message and felt his stomach drop. Someone was attacking his family.

With a burst of light he concentrated on Sam's magic in order to appear by her. Arriving at home however left him a little disoriented with the lack of magic in the area after having been in Hogwarts.

He didn't have time to orient himself however. He arrived just in time to hear Sam cry out in fright. Anger unlike anything that had ever felt went through him as he began to make his way towards the person trying to hurt Sam.

A witch that he didn't know wearing dark robes standing just inside the bathroom came into his sight. Growling slightly he studied the woman as he began to stalk towards her. She smelt unclean. Like the magic around her was decaying. Looking at the woman he saw that the colors around her were very dark nearing black in some areas.

The smell of the magic decaying around the witch had Harry's hackles up. Something was very wrong with the magic the woman was using. He felt the magic in the area surround him lending its strength as he approached. Whatever the woman was doing with magic the magic did not like it. In fact he almost felt like she was killing it.

When the witch turned to look at him he pushed his magic out and growled allowing the animal instinct within him out. He was no longer Harry a child but a cold predator protecting what was his.

Harry focused all his attention to the witch who was misusing magic. He stalked towards her throwing his magic directly at her allowing her to feel his power.

He was the guardian. The witch misusing magic was dead.

The amount of power he pushed towards the witch however only caused her to grab Sam and place Sam between them.

He could have taken the witch down but not without hurting Sam. He began to stalk the witch circling her waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike when Sam was safe but it just didn't seem to come.

When the witch threatened Sam at wand point Harry knew he had to attack. Taking a chance he flamed to the witch's side and then pounced before she could get her bearings up. He took the witch and Sam down.

With his quarry on the ground Harry began to try and distract her so Sam could get away. He tried to scratch her and bit her but the woman was stronger than he had thought and he had already used a lot of his magic today by flaming all over Britain. He could feel himself beginning to wear out when all of a sudden magic hit him and he was flying towards the wall.

He hit the wall with a loud thunk and fell to the ground. In shock Harry was unable to move for a moment as he listened to the witch declare her victory. Just like that the animal instinct in Harry seemed to retreat. He was just Harry again in his cat form. He looked over at Sam and knew he had to get them both away.

Pretending to be out of it he waited for the witch to turn her back before he sprung into action. He heard the witch scream "Avada Kedavra" and did the only thing he could think of.

Flaming over to Sam he spread his magic over her and flamed again this time forcing his magic to take her with him. It was the first time he had ever tried to flame with someone. It was an odd experience having someone flame with him it was almost like he had a growth.

The minute he arrived in the playground that Mitch had told him to go to Harry knew something was wrong. He could barely stand and his eyes were extremely heavy. He had never felt this tired in his life.

He didn't feel himself collapsing. He felt a small bit of pain as his magic actually forced him back into his human form. Then he fell into a deep sleep as his magic began to recharge.

## Chapter 13

At the sound of the alarm going off the order members immediately were in motion. From past experience the Order knew that the moment that the alarms went off the attack was already under way. If they didn't hurry then the family under attack would have no chance of survival.

"The attack is at Portkey #12." Sirius felt his heart speed up. That was the number that he was in charge of.

Looking over at James they shared a look as they both grabbed a chain around their necks.

"Activate." Echoed around the room as the other members in charge of defending this particular family activated their portkeys

Sirius felt the familiar tug at his navel and tried to prepare himself mentally for what was about to happen.

Portkeying into a battle was one of the worst ways to arrive to a fight. The enemy was given too much warning of the arrival. Worst of all the people arriving by Portkey were usually a little disoriented at first. If it wasn't the quickest way to travel for a group then they wouldn't have used it.

He landed in a squat and immediately had his wand out ready to cast. Adrenaline surged through him as he scanned the area looking for the targets.

What he saw however caused his mouth to drop. On top of the target house which is where they had landed was the dark mark. It wasn't the mark that actually made him pause in disbelief. He had expected to see the dark mark on top of the target house. What he hadn't expected was to see the mark on top of every house on the street. This was a full out battle and not just an attack on a muggle born witch.

Once again he glanced over at James who looked just as shocked as he felt. They had only ten people assigned to this house. There

weren't nearly enough of them to cover the whole street. This was a suicide mission.

Green light shot out of one of the houses as the Death Eaters noticed their arrival. Dodging out of the way the team made their way towards a parked car in order to find shelter.

"Weasley head back to headquarters and tell Dumbledore the situation. We need more people." He heard James bark out the order even as Sirius returned curses at the Death Eaters.

The youngest of the group, Bill Weasley, who had just joined the order after his graduation, immediately followed the order obviously seeing that they were beyond out numbered.

"We continue with the mission as planned extract the family from danger. After the family is safe we'll move on to try and help the rest of the street." James called out the order to the remaining nine people.

Even as James barked out the commands the rest of them knew that there would be very few people left to help. Ducking to escape a stunner aimed his way Sirius began to fire spells as quickly as he could no longer caring about accuracy in order to create a diversion to get the team into the house.

"We're in Padfoot" James yelled to him and spells began to go over his head from the team in the house covering his and Shacklebolt backs as they made their way to the house.

There was a slight pause once they were inside the house. It was completely silent to the point that it was almost eerie. At the bottom of the stairs was a woman laying face up staring blankly up at the ceiling. One of the team members moved forward and checked the woman's pulse although it was obvious that the woman was dead.

They were too late.

The team split into two groups one to search the ground floor and the other to search the top. Sirius moved up the stairs silently and alert for any remaining Death Eaters.



A loud shriek rang through the air. Surprise and hope ran through him. Someone was still fighting. Forgetting protocol Sirius raced forward and towards the door that the screaming was coming from.

“Bloody hell Sirius” He heard Remus call behind him but he ignored him. They weren’t too late there was still someone alive. Crashing the door in Sirius went low and began to throw stunners into the room so that if he did hit any on victims they would be fine. He knew that Remus was doing the same thing but sending stunners high.

Moving into the room he took note that either Remus or himself had hit one of the Death Eaters and the other was still standing over a little girl obviously a little startled at having been interrupted. Taking great satisfaction in it Sirius pointed his wand at the Death Eater and quickly petrified him.

“The rest of the upstairs is clear” He heard Shacklebolt call out.

“Clear here as well. We’ve got a survivor.” Remus called from behind him.

“The cavalry has arrived.” One of the newer order members called out from downstairs relief and excitement obvious in his voice.

Sirius froze for a moment waiting to hear James clear the bottom floor but no sound came. Swearing softly he turned away from the child and looked at Remus who was also turned towards the door frowning.

Gripping his wand tightly Sirius stood up from his crouch and began to make his way towards the door so he could find James and make sure that he was okay.

“Clear down stairs. We’ve got a casualty.” James voice rang up the stairs causing Sirius to let out a sigh of relief. James was alright for now.

Turning his attention back to the child Sirius studied her fear stricken face. She couldn’t be older than ten. Her face was red and puffy from crying. Her night gown was torn and the left sleeve was drenched in

blood. Her hair was a dark brown that was long, frizzy and knotted. His gut clenched as he met her chocolate brown eyes and saw only fear.

“Sh... It’s going to be alright. Can you tell me your name?” He asked the little girl while he approached her slowly.

She let out a little whimper and backed away from him. Merlin he hated it when children got involved.

“Is your name Hermione Granger?” Remus asked from behind him. He watched as the little girl looked up at Remus and nodded her head slightly while she continued to tremble.

Remus began to talk to the little girl using his calmest voice. Sirius stepped back to let Remus work. It was a gift that Remus had with kids that always shocked the hell out of the other Marauders. Children trusted Remus. His gut clenched at that thought. Children trusted Remus but his own best friends didn’t.

Sirius shook his head in disbelief as Remus picked up the kid and the little girl clung to him like a life line.

“Take Shacklebolt and get her out of here?” Sirius ordered Remus as Shacklebolt entered the room.

“You need Shacklebolt here I’ll take her back to headquarters on my own.” Remus argued while shifting the kid in his arms.

He knew that Remus was right that they couldn’t spare anyone in this battle but he couldn’t let Remus take the child alone. He couldn’t risk the kid that way.

“Take Shacklebolt with you and get her out of her Remus.” He repeated a little louder making the girl jump a little. “That’s an order Remus” He barked out when Remus began to open his mouth to protest again.

For a moment their eyes met and Sirius could see the confusion and anger in his friend's eyes. The wolf flashed in Remus' eyes before Remus gave a firm nod.

Sirius turned to the door as he heard the loud crack of Remus and Shacklebolt apparating away.

Making his way to the downstairs he found James kneeling over the muggle lying on the floor. James looked up as he came down the stairs.

"Remus and Shacklebolt got the kid out. No one else is upstairs." Sirius said even as he avoided James' knowing look.

"No survivors down here. We should move on to the next house. The rest of the Order is here as well as Dumbledore. The Death Eaters fled when they saw him." James said in a dead pan voice as he stood up. They both knew that it had been a very risky move having Dumbledore show up; either the Death Eaters would leave or Voldemort would show up as well. They had lucked out.

Neither of them looked back at the dead muggle.

One hour later

This was a bloody nightmare. James had been right that the Death Eaters had fled but they had left a mess.

James and he had split up too begin to go through the houses hit by the Death Eater raid. While they did look for survivors for the most part they were only getting body counts. Ministry workers and the Order raced around together trying to get the place cleaned up enough to allow the muggle police at it.

Sirius gave a little shudder as he walked towards one of the last houses on the block. This would be sixth house that he was going into.

"Sir!" A relieved voice called out from the house causing Sirius to sigh. A fresh face junior Auror stood in the doorway. He stood with his

wand out and his hand trembling obviously trying to preserve the scene and keep the reporters out who were beginning to arrive. As if preserving the scene would do anything.

“Stand down Aurora trainee” Sirius barked out as he walked up the steps to the house. “There is no reason wasting you time preserving the scen..... What the hell” Sirius broke off as he stepped into the living room.

He turned slightly to the Aurora Junior who was smirking at him slightly.

“I’ve kept everyone out Sir.” The Junior mocked him.

“Good work Aurora” Sirius muttered as he entered completely into the house.

It was a blood bath in here, a literal blood bath. Each house he had gone into the muggles had been killed with various curses that left very little blood. In this room however there was blood soaking into the carpet and on the walls. The most startling thing was that most of the blood had quite obviously not come from the muggles. There were several dead Death Eaters with small knives sticking out of various vital organs and veins.

Stepping carefully to the first Death Eater he pulled the mask back to see a young girl that he didn’t know; most likely one of Voldemort’s new recruits. They were getting younger and younger. The second mask he removed was another unfamiliar face. Picking up the wands of the first two Death Eaters he moved towards the last one and removed the mask and began to swear. Rodolphus Lestranger; his cousin’s husband; one of Voldemorts inner circle.

Turning his head he looked at the dead muggles with amazement. Picking up the third wand he moved towards the man and woman. The woman lay in the man’s lap and he was hunched over her as if protecting her even in death. He carefully checked for a pulse and let out a sad sigh when he felt nothing.

"You put up a good fight." He whispered before he stood up. Turning around in a circle he tried to take in the scene and figure out what had happened but a bloody handprint on the wall had him pause. Someone had gone upstairs.

Moving carefully up the stairs Sirius followed the hand mark to the first door. The room had been gone through quickly as if it had been searched. He winced as he took in the child's room. It obviously belonged to a little boy. The parents had obviously put up a fight to try and save there child.

He was leaving the room when something above the bed caught his eyes. Moving towards the bed he reached for the ornament hanging above the bed. A dream catcher, he smiled sadly at the sight of it. Lily had made one for each of them when they had gone to their first battle and had trouble sleeping. He picked it up and frowned as a small jolt of magic ran through him. Pointing his wand at the dream catcher he ran a quick diagnostic spell. He frowned even more at the results. There was a charm that Lily had made on it that acted a lot like a sleeping potion.

Turning the Dream catcher in his hand he studied it. He had never seen the charm outside of Lily doing it. Breaking all protocol he slipped the Dream catcher into his pocket and once again examined the room. Seeing nothing else that caught his attention he moved to the next room that the bloody hand was on.

A sign hung crooked on the door with the word Princess written on it. He pushed the door open and prepared himself as well as he could for dead children although he had never truly learned how to prepare for that. But all there was in this room was a sign of a struggle. Moving into the room he took in the dolls and stuffed bears tossed carelessly around the room. Looking toward the bed he saw another Dream catcher hanging above it. Moving towards it he began to reach for it but his eyes caught sight of another stuff bear or deer he should say the bed. Smiling at seeing the stag in a blue skirt he picked it up and studied it. Once again magic shot through the animal confusing him. Taking his wand he once again caste a diagnostic spell only to find that it had been transfigured.

Taking a greater interest in the stag he studied it closer. It actually looked quiet familiar. Almost like the witch or wizard had been trying to make it look like James. Dismissing that thought he went to put the stag back down when a collar caught his attention. Reading the name on the collar his blood ran cold.

Prongs.

What the hell was going on. Racing out of the room he raced through the upstairs looking any sign of the children that obviously lived here. The only thing he found was more signs of a struggle in the bathroom. There were no bodies upstairs.

His heart was racing. In the back of his mind he could hear James telling him over and over that Lily wasn't dead. But he had dismissed that for his friend not being able to let go. What if he had been wrong?

Still holding the stag he moved down the stairs. At the bottom he pushed the dead muggle man off of the woman praying that it wasn't Lily. He felt a bit of guilt when relief raced through him at the sight of a strange woman.

"Aurora did you find any survivors in the house." Sirius snapped as he began to turn.

"No sir" The Aurora said firmly.

A small cry rang out from behind the Aurora but Sirius ignored it as the sound of the grieving muggles that were beginning to turn up.

"Then did you find the bodies of the children that live here?" Sirius asked as he turned around finally looking at the Aurora.

"No Sir. There were no children. The only bodies are the ones in this room." The Aurora answered.

Sirius however barely heard him. His eyes were locked on the red head standing behind the Aurora staring at the bodies behind him. He

watched as her head whipped up and looked at the Aurora when he answered that there was no children.

The woman closed her eyes for a moment and it seemed like relief poured out of her. When she opened her eyes emerald green eyes met crystal blue eyes. He watched in fascination as her eyes widened in recognition.

“Lily?” He whispered in wonder.

She smiled slightly then looked back down at the bodies behind her. He watched as tears filled her eyes. When she looked back at him her eyes were filled with sadness and regret. Before he even knew what she was doing she turned and with a loud crack disappeared.

“Lily!” He yelled over the surprised Juniors cry.

Looking down at the stuff stag in his hand his heart dropped. What the hell was going on?

“Padfoot what’s up? You’ve been in this house for a long time?” James called out as he made his way towards him.

Looking at James Sirius debated what to say. Finally turning around he motioned for James to follow him into the house. Until he knew more of what was going on he wasn’t going to say anything to James. His best friend had been through enough. He didn’t need to know that Lily had just been here and left voluntarily.

Just what the hell was Lily up too?

POV Change

Lily looked down at the phone in her hand and frowned. She had been attempting to call Kim at home for the last hour while she was on break to find out if Harry had made it home yet but there had been no answer. It was very rare that no one was home to answer the phone especially at night.

“Hey Lily your break ended five minutes ago” One of the girls called over the loud music from the bar. Lily swore quietly as she put the phone down and walked back to the bar.

“Any luck?” Mandy one of the bar tenders asked as Lily reached the bar and grabbed her tray.

“No answer” Lily answered while she bit her lip trying to convince herself that everything was fine. In the back of her mind however she kept seeing Mitch looking out the window almost fearfully.

Turning to go back into the crowd her eyes fell on the phone and paused. Something felt off.

“Lily!” One of the girls called out to her breaking her out of her trance. Looking out into the crowd and back at the phone and made up her mind.

Turning back to the main bartender Lily put the tray down.

“Mandy can you cover for me I have to run home.” Lily called out even as she made her way towards the door.

“Wait Lily” She heard Mandy call out but Lily ignored her. A man reached out to grab her but Lily dodged his hands too focused on getting home. She knew that there was a very good chance that she had just lost her job over nothing but she would worry about that later.

There were just too many things wrong at home for her to ignore. She was worried about whether or not Harry had made it home. She was worried about whatever Mitch had wanted to talk to her about. She was extremely worried about why no one was answering the phone. Lily knew that Kim would have called her the minute that Harry arrived home and she couldn’t believe that Mitch and Kim would leave the house without Harry. Something had to be wrong.

The drive home from the bar was the longest in her life. Her mind raced over the different situations that could have occurred. She kept thinking of what if’s.



She was just turning the last corner to her house when she arrived to pandemonium. Wizards were running up and down her street in complete chaos and didn't appear to care at all about the stature of secrecy.

Her heart began to pound loudly and for a minute she thought that the wizards were Death Eaters. She quickly dismissed that idea however when she noticed that the wizards were mostly wearing Aurora colors. Lily ducked in her car when she saw a witch look towards her car but the witch didn't make any move to come towards her. Instead the witch looked up into the night sky and then turned and moved up a driveway.

Driving very slowly Lily made her way down the street scanning the witches and wizards she nearly lost control of the car when she spotted Dumbledore talking to a wizard she didn't recognize. If Dumbledore was there it was almost a for sure thing that the Order of the Phoenix was there as well. If the Order was there that would mean that there was a good chance that there were more wizards and witches that she would know. More importantly there was a good chance that James was somewhere in this mess. She should have been worried about being seen but the closer she got to her home the more dread ate at her gut.

It wasn't until she was at her house and getting out of the car that she looked up to see the rows upon rows of dark marks over all the houses on her street. She spun around quickly to look above her home and felt the blood run cold at the sight of the mark above. Dropping her purse she raced up the drive way towards the front door praying that her family was alright. The wizard at the front door glanced her way but obviously didn't consider her much of a threat and turned back to whoever he was talking to in the house.

She stopped short of the door and let out a cry of pain at the sight of Mitch slumped over Kim. Both of them were too still and pale to be alive. Her mind screamed and she felt her heart drop. They were dead. She had failed her family. She didn't even look at the wizard kneeling over Mitch and Kim too in shock to really register anything.

She heard the wizard at the door say there were no survivors and her world fell apart. She let out a moan of pain and bowed her head as tears filled her eyes.

O Merlin it hurt.

An image of her son laughing and racing around with Sam came to her mind. O Merlin her babies.

“No Sir. There were no children” The wizard at the door said and Lily froze on the spot. The words took a moment to register. Harry and Sam weren’t in the house. Her mind raced with possibilities.

She looked up at the Aurora standing at the door feeling hope returning to her. There was a chance that Sam and Harry were alright. She had to focus on that. Feeling someone watching her Lily looked over at the wizard who had been kneeling over her friends’ bodies. It only took her a moment to recognize Sirius.

He was looking at her with astonishment. Of course he would be after all he thought she was dead. Her eyes fell back down to Mitch and Kim and she felt tears come to her eyes. She wanted so badly to run up to Sirius and hug him. Let him comfort her until James came along to take over. To let someone else carry that burden she was about to take on. But she had to remain strong the children were out there. Looking at Mitch she remembered him telling Harry that if there was trouble to go to the school’s playground. Hoping that Harry had listened to Mitch Lily looked back up at Sirius.

“Lily” Sirius whispered in wonder causing the other wizard at the door to actually look at her in confusion.

Smiling slightly at him she dismissed ignoring Sirius’ calling her name louder.

Reappearing at the school playground Lily looked around frantically for any sign of the kids. Her heart dropped when she didn’t immediately see them.

“Harry! Samantha!” She called out to the empty playground.

A Phoenix's song had her whipping around in the opposite direction. Racing off to a piece of playground equipment she ducked under it and felt her knees go weak with relief. They were both there curled up together the way they used to sleep when they had been babies and toddlers. Collapsing beside them she frantically searched for pulses and only began to relax when she felt two steady rhythms. Sam had tears and blood dried on her face and Harry was pale and a little shaky but they were both alive.

Running her hands through their hair Lily began to shake as the realization of what had happened hit. Lily began to cry quietly for Kim and Mitch. Her heart hurt for the loss of two people who had become her friends and family. There would only be tonight however to mourn for them. Come the morning she would have to take Harry and Sam and disappear. This time she would have no help. She was truly on her own. She would have to protect both of the children. But she would worry about that tomorrow. Tonight she mourned.

## Chapter 14

Sirius sat in Dumbledores office too lost in his own thoughts to even attempt to pay attention to what was being said around him. Sliding his hand back into his pocket he ran his fingers first over the shrunken deer stuff animal and then over the dream catcher.

His mind was going a million miles an hour trying to put together some clue of what was going on. Had it been Lily that he had seen? He tried to recall every detail of the woman that he had seen just hours earlier. He hadn't said anything to Prongs knowing that his best friend had never gotten over losing his wife. If he hadn't seen Lily there was no way he was going to say anything about what he had found in that house.

Looking over at his friend he began to wonder. Why had James always been so insistent that Lily was alive and well? Was he just unable to accept the truth or did he have some kind of proof that he was just unwilling to share with anyone?

With his fingers still moving along the items in his pocket he thought back to the day Lily had 'died'. They had never found a body but the amount of her blood had left no doubt in anyone's mind that Lily had died. Well almost everyone... Prongs had always said that it was to perfect like it was staged. Even Sirius had agreed that there were certain things that didn't add up. The spells that Lily had used had been one of them; they weren't spells that Lily would normally use. At the time he had chalked that up to Lily being desperate and willing to try anything to get away. Now though he wasn't too sure.

The woman he had seen could definitely have been her. The same color hair, red, not reddish brown or orangey red, but vibrant red. Her eyes had been the same shade of emerald green. Of course not every thing had been the same, but then he hadn't seen her for years and people changed. It was definitely possible that he had seen her.

But what reasons would she have to fake her own death?

Had she wanted to leave the wizarding world? Surely she knew that James would have left with her without a moment's hesitation. James

would follow Lily to the end of the world. Surely he had proved that at Hogwarts when he didn't give up asking her out no matter what hex she threw at him.

Had she wanted to leave James? There were easier ways of leaving someone, it might have been difficult for her to actually divorce James considering that was something that was almost unheard of in the wizarding world but not impossible. Of course James would have fought that tooth and nail. Perhaps that was it; Lily would have known that James would never have let her leave without putting up one hell of a fight.

Thinking back to the weeks before Lily had 'died' he tried to remember if she had been acting oddly around James. Had James said anything about her trying to distance herself? No matter how hard he tried he couldn't remember anything like that. All he could really remember was Lily always wanting people to come over or to go out. In fact if he remembered correctly James had even canceled a few of the boys' nights out hadn't he. It had been so long that he could barely recall; however he was fairly sure that James had cancelled boys' nights because Lily wanted to spend time with him. He could even vaguely recall being upset about that and slightly confused because Lily had never done anything like that before. In fact she had always encouraged James to go out with his friends even when James hadn't wanted to; saying something like how rare it was to have friends like that.

Pausing his thought process he sat up slightly. It was almost like Lily had known she was going to 'die' or more likely disappear and she had been trying to spend as much time as she could with those she loved.

When had she started acting like that? Had she been acting strange? He could recall Lily bursting into tears for no apparent reason. He smiled slightly remembering the first time she had done that. James had left the room to get something and Lily had watched James leave and then looked at him and burst out into tears. He had been flabbergasted and had immediately tried to get her to calm down. When James had walked back into the room he had nearly thrown him out of the house for upsetting Lily. Not believing that he hadn't

done anything. Lily had been inconsolable for nearly ten minutes and then suddenly she had been happy and chipper then not five minutes latter she been angry as hell then back to the tears. She had scared the living daylights out of James and himself. He could even remember thinking at the time that she might be possessed. He had thought this mostly because Lily didn't cry, ever, and while she did have temper it usually took a lot to provoke it.

She had been like that for weeks before she had disappeared though. The more he thought about the more times he could remember her mood shifts. She had been sick right before as well. James had been after her to go see a healer but she had been insistent that she was fine. James had confided in him that he had been worried sick about her. But she had been like that before she started to surround herself with people... Hadn't she?

Hell she had almost been acting as bad as Alice pregnant with Neville now that he thought about it. Although she had never eaten half of the awful things that Alice did. However she did start to eat a hell of a lot more...

Like lightening had hit him Sirius sat up straight. Shit! Lily had acted exactly like Alice.

Memories raced through his mind of Lily smiling secretly at James with her hand on her stomach, of Lily eating things that she had previously hated, of hundreds of odd little things that Lily had done at the time that now made sense.

He ran his hand over the deer again. Lily had been pregnant.

Had it not been James? Had she left knowing that it would tare James apart if she had cheated on him? He immediately threw that thought out of his mind. Lily would never have done that. Lily had been spending more time with James then anyone. He could now even remember Lily asking James hypothetical questions about babies.

So why would she run?

It came to him without any problems... the prophecy. She started to act odd when she had heard the prophecy. She disappeared to protect her child... James' child.

And if Lily was still hiding... That meant that the child fit the prophecy.

They had so many people protecting Neville believing that he was the only one that could defeat Voldemort. But there was another child out there with only Lily to protect it.

Sirius felt like was going to be sick and laugh at the same time.

"Sirius!" He blinked a few times in confusion before he realized that he had been staring at James the whole time.

"How did you know she was alive?" his voice came out raspy and just barely a whisper to James still dazed at his discovery.

"What the little girl?" James asked as he looked down at the file in his hand before looking up. "Hermione Granger? What do you mean how did I know she was alive? I didn't know she was still alive. Now will you pay attention to the meeting and tell us what..."

"Not the kid. How did you know that Lily was alive?" Sirius choked out interrupting James. It wasn't till he heard the intakes of breath and gasps around him that he remembered where he was and that there were other people there.

Winced Sirius looked around the room to see who else was there. Minerva looked shocked and appalled that he would bring up Lily. Kingsley looked as collected as always if but a little confused and then there was Remus who looked furious.

"What the hell Sirius!" Remus bellowed as he stood up out of his chair. Both Remus and he had spent months trying to put James back together after Lily disappeared and he knew Remus was pissed about bringing her up. They both tried to never mention her around James.

Sirius tried very hard not to think it, but a small voice at the back of his mind whispered that there went Lily's hard work of trying to stay hidden from Voldemort.

Finally he brought his attention to his best friend who was looking at him dumbfounded.

"Why are you asking that Sirius? You've always been very adamant that Lily was dead and not coming back." James asked as he searched Sirius' face for an answer.

Sirius felt trapped. He knew he couldn't take back his question and he was kicking himself now. What did he say? Did he tell James about his suspicions of the child?

His eyes darted to Remus for a moment and then back to James. No he wouldn't talk about the kid here. When James and he were alone maybe he would tell, but not here.

"I um I think I saw her today" Sirius barely got out before James was out of his seat and directly in front him.

James' eyes which had been rather dull since her disappearance seemed to light up with hope.

"Where?" James asked staring him directly in the eye almost pleading with Sirius to tell him.

"I can't be sure it was her James. But it... Well I think it was." He whispered and once again wished they didn't have the audience.

"Where!" James shouted while taking hold of Sirius' shirt and pulling Sirius towards him.

"At the House." It was all he needed to say for everyone in the room to know where he was talking about. Everyone had heard about the muggle that had killed several Death Eaters.

James had only seen the downstairs where the bodies and carnage was. Sirius hadn't thought it would be good idea at the time for James



to go through the rest of the house incase he had found something that screamed Lily had been there. Now he wasn't sure that that had been a good idea. No one knew Lily's magic and spells better then James and there would be no way for him to see if he could spot anything else. The clean up crew had been through there and anything that looked magical had been taken out so muggle authorities could go through with there investigation.

James reeled back like he had been slapped, moving backwards until he slumped back into his chair. James' face had gone white and his eyes went slightly vacant as the hope that had been there only moments ago seemed to slipped away.

"Is that why you kept me from looking around the house? Was her body in there?" James asked as his hand reached to his throat and pulled out a chain that Sirius had never noticed he wore. And there on the chain was James' wedding ring. He watched as James clenched the ring and then visually relaxed.

"No, Merlin, no James. I saw her or someone that looked like her walking up to the House while I was looking at the bodies..." He began only to find James once again in his face.

"Then why the hell didn't you grab her and bring her to me" James practically hissed into his face with anger.

"I... Damn it James I was shocked okay. Before I could even react she apparated away."

Sirius watched as his best friend pulled away from him. James closed his eyes obviously trying to hold down the emotions of almost having Lily back. Then suddenly James was turning and moving towards the door. James appeared to be a man on a mission. But before James could get to the door Remus was in front of him stopping him.

"Get the hell out of my way Remus" James growled out looking more dangerous then Sirius had ever seen him before.

"And where are going to go James?" Remus said in his calming tone. "You heard Sirius whoever he saw is gone. Her trail will already be

too old to follow.” James looked ready to deck Remus to get him to move before his shoulders slumped and he collapsed into a chair resting his head on his hands.

“Perhaps you would be so kind as to show us this memory Sirius.” Dumbledore spoke up for the first time while standing up and moving towards his pensieve.

Looking once more at James who was now looking at him with hungry eyes, Sirius nodded slowly.

Getting up he moved to the pensieve and placed his memory into the bowl of the woman who looked like Lily.

The people in the room gathered around the pensieve and as one entered it.

He heard Minerva gasp at the carnage in the room but he didn't glance away from the memory of the red head. Being able to look at her this way he was once again struck by how much she looked like Lily that he was now positive that this was indeed Lily. His view of the red head was obscured as James stepped into his field of vision. He watched as his best friend moved up to the frozen image of the Lily and stared at her with longing. He watched helpless as James raised his hand to touch her face only to drop his hand abruptly as if remembering that it was only a memory.

“Merlin, she looks just like Lily” Sirius heard Remus whisper beside him in amazement.

Taking a deep breath he moved forward to stand beside James when no one else seemed inclined to.

“She was so close. Why did she leave?” James whispered in torment.

“James how did you know she was alive?” He asked once again.

James didn't look away from the image of Lily as he reached up to grasp his wedding ring. Sirius watched as James ran his thumb over the simple gold band.

"I had an enchantment placed on our wedding bands." James said dully. His words seemed to echo in the memory.

"What kind of enchantment? Why didn't you ever tell us?" Sirius asked confused and hurt that James had never told them before. It just didn't make any sense. If James had proof that Lily was alive why hadn't he ever told anyone? James seemed even now hesitant to tell what the enchantment was. After several moments of silence James sighed and finally looked away from Lily. James' eyes were begging Sirius to understand making Sirius very uneasy. What had James done?

"A binding enchantment" James stated causing several people to stare at James in shock. Sirius looked at James feeling stunned. That would definitely explain why James had never told anyone.

There was a wide range of binding spells and all of them were considered to be part of the dark arts. Hell the dark mark that death eaters bore on their left arm was a type of binding spell. What the hell had James been thinking?

"How strong of a binding spell James?" Albus asked when it became obvious that no one else was going too.

"Only a weak one that would let me know if she was alright." James said as he turned back to look at Lily. "The spell isn't on Lily per say but on her ring. She just never takes it off." James admitted with a pained smile.

"Have you tried to track the ring?" Remus asked.

James snorted and turned around to look at Remus giving him the look of 'did you really just ask that.'

"She's put a very strong cloaking charm on herself. I have tried everything and never come up with anything." The frustration in James' voice was evident to them all.

"You should have told us James. We might have been able to help." Sirius said even while he understood why James had never said anything.

"I also..." James paused for a moment as if trying to decide if he should continue or not. "I also still dream about her" he finally finished.

"Well that is understandable." Minerva said only to be cut off by James.

"No, I mean we seem to share dreams. It's like I'm talking to her. She talks to me; I think she knows that we're sharing the dream because she never tells me a bloody thing." James said as he began to run his hands through his hair.

"Come let us leave Sirius' memory and we can talk about this new development." Albus said.

James looked once more at Lily before nodding and they all left the memory.

### POV Change

Lily woke up feeling cold and damp. She had a slight headache as if she had fallen asleep crying. There were two warm bodies curled into either side of her making her aware that Harry and Sam had slept with her. Which was odd; it had been a lot of years since either of the kids had slept with her, and even then it had almost always been just Harry that would slip into her bed while Sam would curl up with Mitch and Kim.

She shifted a little trying to get comfortable. When had her bed become so uncomfortable?

Opening her eyes she was startled to find that she was outside. Looking on either side of her she saw that Harry and Sam were indeed pushed up against her sleeping. However Harry was pale and looked almost sick making Lily feel a little panicked considering Harry had never been sick before. And Sam dear Merlin she was covered in

blood... And just like that the night before came back to her. She closed her eyes as a wave of pain crashed over her.

Pushing the pain away she opened her eyes. She didn't have time to feel sad she had to take care of the kids. She hadn't meant to fall asleep outside; what if someone had come across them last night. A small chirp came from above causing her to look up and see the familiar sight of Bird.

"Thank you for watching over us" She whispered.

Bird nodded to her before bursting into flame and disappearing.

Looking around she gave thanks to Merlin that it was still very earlier and no one was out and about yet. Turning her attention to Harry first she ran her fingers through his hair and smiled as he leaned into the touch like he always did.

"Harry, love, it's time to wake up." She whispered into his ear.

His nose scrunched up in distaste as he groaned fighting to stay asleep as hard as he could.

"Come on Harry" She said one more time then turned to wake Sam only to find Sam watching her with dull eyes.

"Sam? Are you hurt anywhere?" she asked to make sure she hadn't missed anything the night before. However she got no reply.

"Oh Samantha" Lily whispered as the pain seeped into her. Taking Sam into her arms she hugged the little girl fiercely but got no response. Finally releasing Sam, Lily turned back to Harry to find his sleepy eyes beginning to open.

"Come on you two, we need to get a move on." Lily stated as she stood up and reached down and pulled one child then the other up to their feet. She bit her lip when she saw Harry sway for a moment before leaning against her.

What was she going to do with one child who was almost catatonic and the other obviously coming down with something.

Well first things first she had to get them to somewhere where they could sleep. She had about fifty dollars in her pocket which meant she could get a room at a cheap hotel. When she had the kids somewhere they could rest she would start to rebuild their lives again.

"Harry can you turn into Tripsie and follow my apparition?" She asked only to get a small groan out of Harry as he buried his face into her side. Alright that idea was out next idea.

"Alright sweetie, I want you to wait for me here. I'm going to apparate with Sam to a hotel and then I'll be right back for you okay." She said as she placed a hand on his cheek to feel if he was warmer than usual.

"Kay" Harry whispered back to her as he curled back up on the ground.

She hated to leave him by himself but there was no way she could take all three of them at once. Turning back to Sam she wrapped the little girl in her arms and pictured the alley behind a rather run down hotel that she knew of.

Within moments she was in the alley with Sam.

"Now Sam I need you to wait here for a moment I'm going to go get Harry alright?" But once again there was no reply from Sam.

Biting her lip she looked at Sam trying to decide if she would be okay on her own for a few minutes. Looking up and down the alley she didn't see anything dangerous and she had to go get Harry. With that thought she apparated back to the playground to find Harry once again asleep.

Sighing she picked up her little boy and swayed under his weight. He was getting way too big for her to be carrying.

She quickly apparated back to the alley to find Sam standing exactly where she had left her moments ago.

“Come on Sam.” She said as she moved out of the alley towards the door of the hotel. She glanced back once to make sure that Sam was following then shifted Harry’s weight and entered the hotel.

Seeing a chair off to the side she set Harry down.

“Wait here Sam as I get a room” She said and waited until Sam followed her order before walking to the receptionist.

By the time she got a room she was thanking whoever was listening that the receptionist hadn’t noticed or commented about the condition the trio was in. Moving back to the kids she picked Harry up again and told Sam to follow her.

Once in their room she scrunched up her nose at the shabby shape it was in before setting Harry onto the bed and under the covers.

“Sam are you hungry?” Lily asked hoping to get a response but nothing came. “Are you tired sweetie?” She tried again. “Why don’t you go into the bathroom and wash up, I’ll be in there in a moment to help you” She finally said when she got no reply.

She watched as Sam moved into the bathroom slowly. Sitting on the edge of one of the beds she looked down at her lap and felt useless. Harry let out a little moan behind her as the sound of water filling the tub came from the bathroom.

Her eyes fell onto the phone she needed to help. She stood and picked up the phone and put it down right away. Who could she call? She could call James... But she couldn’t do that. Nothing had changed from when she had first left. She wanted to keep Harry away from the wizarding world. There was no way Voldemort would ignore the fact that Potter had a child pop up out of no where. He would wonder why Harry was kept hidden. She didn’t know any other wizards or witches that had a phone that she could call. Mitch didn’t have anyone she could contact and Kim’s parents were dead and

although she did have a lot of cousins none of them actually lived in the UK.

A name popped into her head suddenly; she was about to dismiss when the water stopped in the bathroom and Harry gave a small cry in his sleep. Picking up the phone she called the operator and got the number she needed. With a shaking hand she dialed the number that had been given to her.

“Hello” A voice from her past answered the phone on the third ring. For a moment Lily felt paralyzed. “Hello?” The voice came again a little more abruptly.

“I... I need your help.” She finally choked out.

Four hours later

Lily sat in a chair looking at the bed that Harry and Sam were sleeping in. Sam was scrubbed clean but still wearing her filthy clothes having nothing else to change into. After her phone call she had found Sam sitting in the tub hugging her knees with tears in her eyes. She had washed Sam like she used to when Sam had been very little. Then she had helped Sam back into her clothes. Sam had looked down at her bloody clothes and had blinked before she threw herself into Lily’s arms and broken down. Lily had held her for an hour as the little girl had cried her heart out before falling asleep. Lily had picked her up and put her into bed and had been sitting there since just watching them.

There was a knock at the door causing Lily to jump. Looking at the door and then back at the children to make sure they were still asleep she got up and answered the door.

Standing before her was a no nonsense woman who was carrying several bags. For a moment she thought she was looking at her own mother but she knew that that wasn’t possible. Finally breaking out of her trance she felt herself begin to fall apart at the sight of someone who was strong enough to look after them all for awhile. The woman dropped the bags and took Lily into her arms. Lily started to cry



quietly letting her sister, Petunia, take care of her like she had when they had been children.

## Chapter 15

"Hello" Petunia Dursley answered the phone after its third ring ready to tell the telemarketer that she wasn't interested in anything they were selling. Instead of an annoying sales pitch however all she could hear was heavy breathing on the other end of the line. Even more annoyed now at having to deal with a kid pulling a stupid prank she called out "Hello?" one more time even as she promised herself she would never let her Dudders grow up to pull these sort of pranks. Not getting a reply as she suspected she went to hang up the phone when a shaky voice from her past finally answered with an unsteady "I...I need your help."

Petunia Dursley did not get shocked often. She did not need to be told who it was on the other end of the phone she already knew. Even if she thought it was impossible.

"Petunia" The voice called out through the phone and Petunia was suddenly in the past.

She could picture a tiny little girl with red hair in knots and scabbed knees lying on the ground under a bike calling her name, asking what she had done wrong.

She could see the same girl a little older whimpering and once again calling to her asking why grandma had died.

The red haired girl even older in her coltish stage asking her if all boys were jerks.

Another memory came to mind after that of a man she barely knew standing at her front door looking like hell. His wild brown hair looked even more messed up than usual almost looking like the man had not bothered to wash it for a couple of days. His eyes were blood shot and evidence of both lack of sleep and tears. She had only seen him a couple times having felt more comfortable staying as far away from that world as she could. But every time she had seen him he had been full of life, laughing, his eyes full of mischief. She didn't think she had ever seen him not smiling. She barely recognized the broken man standing on her front stoop. She could remember the fear that

had clutched at her heart. She had known what he was going to say before he had even opened his mouth. She had barely listened to him as he broke the news that Lily was dead his even voice breaking at points betraying his disbelief and pain.

“Petunia please I need you” Lily's voice broke over the phone pulling Petunia from her memories.

Noticing that she was clenching the phone hard she focused on relaxing her grip fearing that if she didn't she might break the phone. Grabbing the pen and paper she always kept beside the phone she took a deep breath trying every method she knew to relax.

“What do you need Lily?” She asks and is surprised at how calm she sounds. She desperately wants to ask Lily where she is, what she's been up to and what's going on but she knows this isn't the time.

There is no question of whether or not she'll help. It doesn't matter that the last time that they talk they had had the mother of all fights. It didn't matter that she had sworn to herself that she never wanted anything to do with that world after her parents death in a car accident and Lily being unable to do anything for them. She had reaffirmed this promise to herself when she had thought Lily had died. None of that matters.

She knows that Lily knows this as well. It was how they were raised. Family came first. If a family member needed help you helped and that was that. It didn't matter if you hated each other you were still family. And her feelings for her little sister were most certainly not hate, although it took thinking Lily was dead to figure that out. Family came first was a lesson that their parents had drilled into them from the time they could walk.

“I'm in a hotel in London. I need money I guess and um I don't know... I need you.” Petunia tried to understand what Lily was saying but Lily was stuttering badly and gasping into the phone like she was either crying or trying very hard not too. Fear clutched at her heart.

"Calm down Lily. Hush. Start by telling me what happened" She used the same tone she had used when they had been younger and Lily had been upset.

"They killed them. There dead Petunia. They slaughtered them and they didn't stand a chance against them." Lily whimpered into the phone quietly.

With those few words Petunia felt the world shift under her feet and the blood in her veins turn to ice. What had Lily gotten herself into.

"Are you okay? Are you hurt?" She broke Lily off from her ramblings.

"I'm fine, I wasn't there. I couldn't help them." Petunia closed her eyes and thanked God for keeping her sister safe but her eyes flew open as her sister continued.

"But the kids Petunia there not doing well. I don't know what to do" Lily finished with a soft sob.

Kids... Lily had children. She didn't know how many more shocks she could take in the space of ten minutes.

"Kids? Lily what children?"

"Harry and Samantha. Harry wont stay awake and Sam hasn't said anything. I think... I think she saw her parents get murdered." Lily whispered into the phone sounding like the lost little girl that used to go to Petunia after watching a scary movie.

So at least this Samantha wasn't Lily's child. She was a little confused as to why her sister had someone else's child with her but once again this wasn't the time to grill.

She talked to Lily for another ten minutes dragging information out of her so she would know what she needed to do and bring to help Lily. Hanging up the phone she looked down at the list she had made and bit her lip slightly. A habit that she had thought she had grown out of.

First things first she picked up the phone again and dialed Tory Peirce's number and made arrangements for her to pick up Dudley from school and watch him until Vernon got home. She briefly explained that an emergency had come up that she had to deal with.

After hanging up she called Vernon's work and had to hold back a swear when she was told he was out of the office and wouldn't be back for some time still. Hanging up leaving a brief message that she had to go out and that Tory was watching Dudley she wrote a quick note and placed it on the table.

Vernon,

One of my girlfriends needed my help. I'll call tonight and give you more details.

I know this is short notice and I wouldn't just leave you and Dudley unless it was an emergency.

Love you,

Petunia.

She knew that it didn't explain anything and was beyond vague but it would have to do. Vernon had never liked Lily and she doubted he would understand that she needed to help her sister.

Racing up the stairs she grabbed a duffel bag and threw some clothes into it that she hoped would fit Lily. Next she rushed into Dudley's room and grabbed some of his older clothing. She had dragged the ages of the children out of Lily so knew that all the kids were around the same age. Hopefully this would mean the clothes would fit Lily's boy, although Dudley did take after his father, but they would have to do for the moment.

Next she went into the bathroom and grabbed all the medicine she could find and other bathroom essentials.

With that done she went back into her room and into the closet. Reaching up she grabbed one of the many shoe boxes and lifted it

down. Opening it she grabbed nearly a thousand pounds of her mad money. Something her mother had drilled into her, always keep some money in the house you never know when you'll need it to get something your husband might not agree with. Easier to keep the peace.

With the money in her hand she next made her way to her jewelry box and rifled through it grabbing pieces that she no longer wore and wouldn't be missed. Her fingers lingered on her mother's brooch for a moment before she finally grabbed it with a pain in her heart. She loved that brooch but her mother would rather it bail out her baby girl then be kept in a drawer to be worn only occasionally.

All in all it only took her fifteen minutes running around the house to gather what she thought might be needed from the time she had hung up the phone.

Calling a cab she waited impatiently to be to reach the nearest train station so she could make her way to London and to her sister. The trip seemed to take forever but she finally found herself outside a run down hotel. Ignoring the looks she was getting she took a moment to ready herself out on the side walk taking deep breaths to steady herself. Her sister didn't need her to fall apart. She needed her older sister to be strong for her. Once she felt a little steadier she made her way into the building. The front desk clerk glanced up from the tv he was watching before looking back down and ignoring her when she continued on towards where she presumed the rooms were. Finding room 108 she stood outside the door for a moment before taking a deep breath and knocking. The door was opened hesitantly at first before thrown open and there she was.

Her little sister looked like hell worn over. Lily had never been as neat as Petunia but Lily had always kept her appearances tidy. The woman in front of her looked like a wreck. She was wearing a little black dress that was perhaps a little too short and showed a bit too much cleavage for what Petunia thought was appropriate. The dress itself was wrinkled and dirty. Lily's beautiful red hair that she had always been jealous of had a cheap hair cut and bits of leaves stuck in it. Bright green eyes stared at her rimmed with tears. Despite all this and beneath the smeared makeup on the woman in front of her

Petunia had no trouble seeing her little sister Lily. Dropping the bags she was carrying she opened her arms and let her sister fall into them like she used to when they had been young and let Lily cry as she made shushing noises to calm her down.

Her sister was hurting badly but at least she was alive.

The next day

Petunia sat in a run down hotel room on the edge of the bed and stared down at the two children curled around each other. She had met Samantha briefly the night before when the little girl had woken up crying. She had watched as Lily had hurried to the child's side and rocked her back and forth while whispering soothing words into the child's ear. She was struck for a moment at just how much Lily looked like their mother as she did that.

Her heart broke for the girl her sister had all but adopted into her family. She was a tiny thing, so much smaller than her Dudley. She had always wanted a girl. She had thought that it would be fun to dress a girl up and play with her hair. She had imagined taking her to ballet and going out for tea like her own mother had done for Lily and herself. She considered briefly about taking the girl from Lily and raising her after hearing Lily tell the whole story. However after watching Lily rock the child back to sleep she threw that idea away. This was Samantha's family and it would be cruel to take the little girl away from the only family she had left and knew.

Samantha had looked at her briefly while Lily had been soothing her. The little girl's eyes were kind of creepy in Petunia's opinion. They were much too large for her face and so dark they looked black. But the creepy part was how dead they had looked. She shivered slightly at what the child must have seen to put that look into her eyes.

A mumble from the bed had Petunia coming back to the present to see her nephew actually move a little bit. Standing up she moved towards him and put a hand on his forehead and frowned slightly. She had never seen a child react like he did to illness.

When Dudley got sick he let the whole world know it. He cried out his pain and complained constantly. When he did finally fall asleep he twisted, turned and moaned to a dramatic extent and would typically wake up frequently during the night to complain some more.

Harry on the other hand hadn't woken, moved or made a peep until now. She would have thought the boy dead if she hadn't watched his chest move up and down. He had had a fever but it was rapidly going down at a rate that Petunia had never heard off.

Petunia studied this little boy more then she had the girl. This was her nephew after all. She couldn't believe how much he looked like his father James. It was unbelievable really. She had had to study him quite hard to find some of Lily's features buried among James features. But she had found a few like the cheek bones.

Looking away from Harry she glanced at the alarm clock to see the time before looking back at the bed. Almost two hours had gone by since Lily had left her with the kids.

Samantha was still asleep wrapped around Harry as if the child was her own personal teddy bear but for the first time since she had arrived green eyes were looking up at her in confusion.

He has Lily's eyes she thought for a brief moment before relief shot through her that the child was finally awake.

"Mom?" She heard the voice call out weakly as he lifted himself up a little obviously looking for Lily. She could see the panic begin to fill his body when he didn't see her but relax a little as his eyes fell on Samantha beside him.

"It's okay Harry. Your mom just stepped out to take care of a few things she'll be back soon I promise. I'm your Aunt Petunia, your mommy's big sister. Has she ever told you about me?" She asked praying to God that Lily had mentioned her to her son so that she wouldn't be a complete surprise like Lily would be to Dudley.

She was surprised when she felt pleasure rush through her at his nod and small excited smile that reached through his eyes. And suddenly



he didn't look like a little clone of James but rather a miniature Lily instead.

“She said that you taught her to ride a bike when Mitch was teaching me how to...” His voice trailed off and suddenly his smile is gone and horror fills his eyes as he looks over at Samantha and then around the room again.

“Where are Mitch and Kim?” He whispers in fear and tears fill his eyes as if he knows the answer already.

Moving to sit beside him on the bed she pulls him into a hug and kisses his head.

“I'm so sorry Harry. So so sorry.” She whispers into his hair as he begins to cry and just like Lily had done the night before with Samantha she rocks the little boy in her arms.

She knows what happened to his family, Lily had given her a brief summary and she had at the time felt the old feeling of hate for magic and how destructive it was fill her. But as she held Harry in her arms, a nephew that twenty-four hours ago she didn't know existed she thanks God that he had the same magic in his body that saved him last night.

After several minutes she feels him begin to calm down and sees that Samantha has also awoken and is crying and clinging to Harry. Moving her arm she pulls Samantha into the hug and starts to tell them stories about Lily when she was a child trying to pull their minds from the horrors they saw the night before. She makes sure that each story is about something funny or embarrassing to keep their attention. As she tells these stories her mind slips away from all the dislikes that she had about Lily when she found out that she was a witch and remembers the little girl that used to drive her batty following her around everywhere. She remembers how much she loved her sister.

After an hour of telling stories she trails off looking down at the kids to see that they have stopped crying and while they aren't laughing,

Harry at least has a small smile on his face and Samantha has been listening to every word she's said.

"Do you have any kids" Harry asks out of the blue and she feels a grin develop on her face as she begins to tell them about her pride and joy Dudley.

She knows that when Lily gets back she's going to take the children and go into hiding again. Petunia understands that completely. You do what you have to do to protect your family. Just as there parents had taught them.

She pauses slightly as Harry seems to get agitated in her arms. She glanced down at him in concern for a moment as she watches confusion come to his eyes then fear and then confusion again. Just as she's about to ask what's wrong he glances at Samantha for a second and it seems like they are having a silent conversation between themselves. Then Harry jumps of the bed a rushes to the bathroom. Before she can get up and follow him to see if he's alright she feels a warm body snuggle up against her.

"Can you tell me more about Aunt Lily when she was little?" Samantha asks. Harry's weird behavior is forgotten as Petunia once again walks down memory lane happy that her stories are helping even a little. There is a long way to go to heal these children.

She feels a small pain in her heart every time she looks at Harry and Samantha knowing that after today she will most likely never see them again. Even if Lily did finally come out hiding. There's just too much bad blood between the two families. However she knew it was time that she stopped pretending she never had a sister and tell Dudley all about his aunt Lily.

POV Change

After she had broken down in Petunia's arms she had slowly pulled herself together. There was a lot for her to do and she no longer had Mitch and Kim's help. And as much as she wanted to lean on Petunia she knew that she couldn't for very long it, was too dangerous and

she didn't want to get her sister in more danger than she had already had. So instead of sleeping the night away she began to plan. She was no longer going to be able to work a full time job but she would be able to manage a part time one while the kids were in school. That however wouldn't leave them with much money coming in which meant she was going to need money a lot of it.

There was quite a lot of money that Mitch, Kim and herself had hidden just in case anything happened and they needed to run. However it wasn't going to be enough to support all three of them for long. There was the money that Petunia had brought and the jewelry which she had protested at first. Her first reaction had been to refuse them especially when she saw her mother's brooch.

"Petunia I can't take these" She had cried out seeing all the jewelry.

Petunia turned and stared at her as if she was being an idiot.

"There just things, and things I don't even wear anymore. I'd rather know that you have some money than keep them around anyway." Petunia declared rather hotly.

"But Pet that's mom's brooch. You've always loved that brooch" She tried again feeling worse and worse that she was doing this to Petunia.

"Don't be an idiot Lily. It's a trinket and your my sister you mean a hell of a lot more to me than some silly brooch. Just what would mother think of me if I didn't help you with this. She'd be devastated that if I didn't help you every way that I can. Besides I think she'd like knowing that she was able to help you beyond the grave."

And that had been the end of the discussion. But that still wouldn't be enough money. They would need a place to live, food, clothing the list just went on and on. There was one place that she could get money but it would be very risky especially now. She knew that her cover was blown. She had no doubt that Sirius would tell James that she was alive. There was no way that he would let that little bomb shell go unsaid. So at least the two of them would be looking for her. And if Sirius was the same lovable moron that he had always been he had

let that piece of knowledge out at the worst time so that even more people would be looking for her.

But she didn't have much choice.

So getting up early the next morning she changed into something her sister had brought for her which was a little more bland then she was used to wearing and went to the nearest drug store and bought a box of hair dye. Then proceeded back to the hotel room where she began to dye her hair which over the years she had gotten quite adapt with doing. She loved her hair color growing up as being something so unusual but when she had been on the run she had cursed it. It stood out just a little to much for her liking. So her hair went from being vibrant red to a dull black with Petunia's help; which did take Lily back to her youth when her sister and she had played hair dresser with each other.

Once her hair was black she kissed Harry and Samantha on the forehead and told Petunia she'd be back as soon as she could.

Going behind the hotel into the dirty alley way she turned quickly and with a rather loud pop apparated away to the bank that Mitch, Kim and herself had used and asked to go to their safety deposit box. While they had put some money into the bank so the could use their interact cards most of there money they stored in their safety deposit box so that if they ever needed to run they would never flag anyone with withdrawing all their money at once. Opening the box she froze for a moment at the site of the home videos and pictures jammed in the box along side the money. Her fingers slipped to the tapes and pictures for a moment before she tore her eyes away from them. She didn't have time to break down today, she needed to move quickly, there would be another day that she could take a walk down memory lane, this was not that day. Taking the money from the box she stuffed it in her purse and put an anti theft charm on it and quickly walked away.

Going around the corner of the bank she once again turned quickly and with a loud pop once again disappeared. This time she reappeared a few blokes from here destination needing to buy something from one of the shops before continuing on. Going shop

from shop looking for the perfect dress she finally found it in a second hand store. It was long, black, cotton, hideous and perfect. Buying the dress she then went to another store and grabbed a random item of the shelf and went into the fitting room. Hanging up the dress she had just bought she took out her wand and began to transfigure it into a witches robe.

Once again she cursed herself for not being better at transfiguration. If she had been she could have used the clothes she was wearing instead she had had to go out and find something long, black and preferably cotton. The less she had to change something the better. As it was she had never been very good at changing clothes and she once again cursed herself for ignoring some of her room mates at Hogwarts that had practiced over and over again how to change clothes into different clothes. She had thought they had been wasting there time then. She had rolled her eyes as they giggled that it would keep their dates on their toes on what they would be wearing every time they left the room. Who knew that one day she would want to have that talent for a very different reason.

Once she had gotten the dress as close to robes as she was going to get them she left the store and walked down the street a few blocks until she saw the Leaky Caldron. Taking a deep breath she slipped into the tavern and slipped into her robe quickly in the cloak room that was of to the left side of the door for just this purpose.

Walking quickly through the tavern she ignored the distrustful glance that she got from Tom and ignored the fearful whispers of the customers about the dreadful attack the night before. Once out the back door she moved to the bricks and pushed the right sequence to get in. It wasn't her first time back in Diagon alley since she went into hiding but it was her first time going to Gringotts. Taking another deep breath she walked into the impressive building and looked around slowly trying to see if there was anyone there that she should be wary of. Seeing no one jump out she made her way to the tellers desk.

“Key” The goblin barked out “Please” he added as an after thought.

"I lost my key" Lily said trying to sound calm although her heart was beating a mile a minute. She felt that at any moment James was going to come up behind her and ask her what she was doing.

The goblin stared at her for moment and growled slightly obviously unhappy with this. Only idiots lost their vault keys.

"Vault number" He barked out annoyance obvious in his tone.

Pausing for a moment she tried to remember what the vault number was before answering "673" she winced at her tone knowing that it didn't sound all that confident. But it had been years since she had had to know the number of the vault. Any time she had been down in the Potter vault James had been with her or she had had the key. Praying she had the right number she waited as he magically flipped through files quicker than her eyes could follow.

He got to the file he was looking for and stopped for a brief moment before looking at her then down at the file again. Then he did something truly frightening he smirked.

"Hand" The goblin barked as he held out a knife still smiling.

Wincing she held out her hand and let him draw the knife across her palm. Even as the blood dropped onto a pedestal below the cut healed itself. Magic at times still amazes her. A brief spark of light and a confirmation appeared in the bowl that only the goblin could read.

Only because she is watching his face does she notice the look of surprise that enters his eyes.

"This way please" He finally calls out turning and walking through a door not even bothering to glance behind him to see if she is following. Moving quickly she follows the goblin through a series of doors getting more and more nervous with each step because this is not a way she knows to the carts.

Finally she follows him through another door where another goblin is waiting and looking at the file that the goblin she had been following had had.

Finally this older looking goblin looks up from the file and looks at her with curiosity.

"Mrs. Lily Anne Potter?" He finally asks.

"Yes" It has been so long since anyone has called her that that it felt odd and yet so right at the same time.

"There seems to be a problem Mrs. Potter. It appears that you have been pronounced legally dead. Now usually when we do a blood check and it confirms the identity of a person we can give out a new key and be done with it. However with you being legally dead we can't do this. The ministry needs more than goblin magic to confirm your identity." The elder goblin spat that out as the younger goblin sneers.

"Now we will have to also call Mr. James Potter in since it is his vault that you want access too." The elder goblin smirks as Lily felt her heart stop momentarily.

It was all over she had messed up and now she was going to put James into danger as well. She new from what Samantha had mumbled last night that Harry had saved her from a Death Eater the night before as Tripsie. There was no way that Death Eaters weren't going to be searching for Samantha and the odd cat. And for her to just show up in the wizarding world with the Potter heir and Samantha... It would take no time at all for them to be even bigger targets and someone might find out Harry's secret.

"I can see you don't want that Mrs. Potter" The head goblin continues to smirks before continuing "But I am honor bound to the ministry to report that you are not dead. And the Potter family has been a loyal client of this establishment almost since the doors opened. It is our duty to inform him... Unless of course..." The head goblin trailed off leaving it to her imagination.

She was going to have to bribe them for their silence. She had come here desperately needing money and she was going to leave here with even less.

"I don't have much money please" She begged whispering her plea.

The goblins watch her unaffected by her plea.

"Go inform the ministry and Mr. Potter Go'lf for" The younger goblin turns around quickly to do the elders bidding but before he can get to the door a flash of fire appears at the doorway and Bird is before them flying gracefully to land on the desk.

The goblins stare at the phoenix for a moment before bowing their heads slightly towards it.

Lily looks at Bird lost wondering what it is doing there before her brain clicks and she turns to Bird with anger in her eyes.

"No! Bad Bird! I demand that you go back immediately. He's sick and needs his rest he doesn't need to be playing follow the leader right now... Unless O' Merlin are they alright? Have they been attacked again?" She begins to panic not even noticing the goblins looking at her as if she were at first ill bred then insane.

If she had been watching them she would have laughed at them jumping when another flash of flame was seen beside Bird and a very familiar cat appears before her.

Forgetting the Goblins she moves to her son and begins to pet him.

"Sweetie are you okay? Is everything alright? Are you feeling better?" She asks a pile of questions worry making her forget that she is being watched. But the last time she had seen her son had been that morning and he had been sick which was highly unusual and had been sleeping since the attack.

She heard Bird warble and Harry answer with a mew but it was the gasps that drew her attention away from her son finally and towards the goblins that were looking at Harry with shock and what she could



only call awe, which she had to admit was a rather odd look for a goblin. She watched as both goblins once again bowed but this time to her son and then to her horror Harry transformed back to his human self.

The goblins stare at her son with fascination written all over their features but she was pulled away from looking at them as Harry yawned and leaned against her looking tired, dirty and a bit of a ragamuffin in the clothes he had on that were several sizes too large. Apparently Petunia's son took more after Vernon's side of the family than the Evens.

"I'm fine. I just used to much magic yesterday. Flaming with Sam was to much to soon. Bird said you needed us for a moment. Is everything okay? What's going on?" He asked still leaning on her and yawning every now and again.

Kneeling down she hugged him and kissed his forehead rolling her eyes slightly as squirmed at that.

"Every thing's fine sweetie. Go back to the hotel now. And please don't do anything magical in front of your aunt okay. She doesn't really like magic. I'll be back soon" She said as ran a hand threw his unruly hair and felt his forehead at the same time to ensure the fever was gone. She glanced at Bird and glared at him again making Bird shift from one claw to the next. With another flash of fire the little boy in front of her turned into a cat again and two more bursts of flame and Bird and Harry were gone.

She looked back at the goblins knowing fear was written all over her expression. She knew she didn't have enough money to bribe them to keep this quiet. Instead of seeing them sneering at her though she found them still with a look of awe on their face but know towards her. She heard them mumble something in gobbledegook before bowing there heads at her.

"Please forgive our earlier rudeness Mrs. Potter. Go'lfor will take you down to your vault immediately. I see no reason to inform anyone that you were here. If there is ever anything the Goblin nation can do for

please feel free to ask.” The elder goblin spoke to her with more politeness and respect than she had ever heard before in a goblin.

“Um... Why... uh um... Thank you?” It was the most ineloquent thank you she had ever given but she was completely lost as to why the goblin nation would help her. A witch. A muggle born witch at that. Whom barely had a pound to her name. Whom had never done anything for them.

“This way Mrs. Potter” Go'lforsaid politely at the door causing her to turn to and leave the office in confusion. She followed the goblin in a daze not even remembering the cart ride. The goblin in the cart had to tell her that they had arrived at the vault before she even recalled why she had come to Gringotts. She didn't have time to be in a daze she scolded herself and pushed the mystery of the goblins to the back of her mind. Mumbling a thank you that she would have scolded Harry for she made her way to the vault and felt the magic pulse around her as it recognized who she was and the doors opened. She could still remember James teasing her when he had brought her here to set her up that she could open the vault without him. Pushing that thought away she entered the vault and stumbled a little at seeing the reminder at just how well off James truly was. Making her way into the vault she grabbed a bag and quickly began to scoop money into it trying to ignore the family pictures watching her and whispering excitedly at the familiar face.

“Lily love! Lily over her dear” She heard the portrait of James mother calling her from the corner. She ignored going even faster now knowing that some of the portraits would be going back Potter Manor and trying to get a hold of James to tell him she was here. It was one of the reasons she had never come here before.

She felt guilt eat at her as she took his money. She had promised herself that she would never take his money after she had left. It wasn't fair to him, she had left him, he shouldn't have to support her. But she focused her thoughts on Harry, their son. She had no doubt that he would do whatever was needed to keep his son safe and alive even empty his vault so she continued to shove money into the bag.

“Mrs. Potter we must leave now!” She heard the cart driver call out to her causing her to jump and look back at him as he looked fearfully towards her and talked into what must be the magical equivalent to a walkie-talkie.

Grabbing the bag that she had filled as full as she wanted she started towards the door while her heart beat widely.

“Oh wait Lily love. Just wait a second.” She heard Clarissa, James mother, call out again.

“Lily! I trusted you not hurt my boy know you stop right there missy” The portrait yelled out again this time sounding panicked and mad.

Turning towards the portrait of the woman that James looked so much like she paused and saw the portrait relax slightly.

“Tell him I'm so sorry. That I'll pay him back some day. That I hope he's moved on” She choked out trying to hold back the tears in her eyes at the thought of James with anyone but her. “Tell him that I only did what I thought was best at the time for our family and am still trying to do that. Tell him that only want him to be happy.” She finished and turned to the door again moving quickly.

“Your what makes him happy dear. Now just stay where you are love let him help you. He's never stopped loving you or looking for you. Please love just stay where you are.” Clarissa called out once again sounding urgent.

“I can't” She yelled over her shoulder “I'm so sorry” She yelled out again once at the door “and tell him I still love him to and miss him every day” She whispered too quietly for the portrait to hear before racing out the door to the sounds of various portraits yelling at her to stop. Jumping into the waiting cart she watched the vault doors slam shut and the cart began to descend quickly.

“Where are we going?” She asked in surprise since the cart was going the wrong way.

"I'm sorry Mrs. Potter but we have to go to one of our other exit's. Your husbands waiting to be taken to his vault and Mr. Black and Mr. Moody are standing at Gringotts front doors." The goblin answered directing the cart through an underground maze of passages.

She gasped in surprise as the narrow tunnel suddenly opened into a huge cave where many goblins stood to the side of the rails and watched them fly by with startled expressions. There were blurs of large signs written in a language she couldn't read and images of goblins everywhere that she could only assume were some type of advertising. She was barely able to glance around the cave before she was back in another tunnel.

"What was that" She couldn't stop herself from asking.

"That was one of central market places. No human has ever seen it. You should feel honor at being so privileged." He spoke quietly obviously concentrating on which switches to magic as they came up to them.

"I am" She whispered in amazement trying to recall everything she had just seen. After thirty minutes of fast cart travel the cart finally slowed to a stop.

"Where are we?" She asked as she stepped out of the cart and into a small bank that only had two tellers.

"We are at one of our smaller branches inside the forbidden forest. We would appreciate if you would not tell anyone of this place unless it is absolutely necessary. If you need anything from the Goblin nation please come to this branch and we will be happy to help. The teller can exchange your money into muggle currency if necessary. I must be getting back now. Have a good day." The goblin finished the longest speech Lily had ever heard a goblin say before turning to the tellers and yelling at them in Gobbledegook which had them look at her with interest and then he was back in the cart and gone leaving her alone in the bank.

Looking around she was surprised to find the clients here were not witches and wizards but rather magical creatures. A wood nymph

stood at one counter, a centaur at the other counter and waiting in line was what Lily could only guess was a fairy. All of which were staring at her warily. Moving cautiously she stepped into line behind the fairy and waited for everyone to stop staring at her it took several minutes. The doors behind her opened and an a large spider entered causing her to gasp in fear and reach slowly for her wand. A firm hand stopped her.

"This is a sanctuary there is no fighting in this place. Every creature that steps in here can do business without fear." A deep voice caught her by surprise causing her to turn her back on the spider and face the centaur who was holding her arm.

"How does this work" She whispered as she felt the spider draw up behind her causing her to shiver. She hated spiders with a passion.

"We all have things that wizards want and unfortunately there are times they have things that we need. Potions for healing, food during poor winters and the such. We bring things here to trade for things we need. The goblins take our goods and get what we need. It is very simple. But they have never brought a human here. Why did they bring you?" He asked his eyes going dark as they stared down at her.

"I don't know" She whispered feeling a little out of the loop.

"Human I can help you know" The goblin called her over making the centaur release her hand. Moving to the counter she could feel the stares of the other clients.

"I need to exchange this into muggle currency." She tried to say firmly but it came out anything but. She felt very unwanted.

The goblin grunted and began to count out the money quickly before handing her over pounds.

"At todays rate here is 20,000 pounds" Lily lifted her eyebrows at that. It was way more then she thought she had gotten but it still wouldn't stop her from making her next stop.

"Thank you" she replied and turned around to find every creature in the building still staring at her before she moved towards the stairs and up to the door. Opening the doors she let out a breath she stood among the thickness of the trees. Turning around to see how the goblins were able to hide a bank in the middle of the woods she stifled a laugh at seeing that the door appeared to be a large tree stump that looked no different then any other tree in the area other a small carving near the base which she couldn't truly make out.

Sighing over the last hours excitement and her head spinning over everything that had happened she decided that this was a good time to leave before the spider came out. Who knew were the sanctuary ended finally she turned quickly and apparated away.

Her next stop was a pawn shop where she went to sell the jewelery that Petunia had brought her. It wouldn't be much but every penny counted.

She watched as the man at the counter checked over every piece deciding there worth barely paying attention to what he was saying.

He reached for the next piece and picked up her mother's broach. As he looked it over Lily felt a the guilt once again take over her. Her right hand reached to her left as she started to twist her wedding ring on her finger. A nervous habit she had picked up. Looking at the ring on her finger she let her mind wander every which direction.

"Is that all miss?" the pawn shop owner called out to her rather loud making her blush realizing she had completely spaced out.

Looking down at her wedding ring then at her mother's broach she slowly slid the ring off.

"No I'm sorry I can't part with the broach." She whispered as she grabbed the broach back and slowly placed the ring there instead.

The old man looked at her and clucked his tongue. Giving her a pity look. He must get this all the time. She glazed down at her ring still feeling James' hand holding hers as he slipped it on her and said his vows.

"You sure miss?" The old man asked as he watched her looking at the ring with tears in her eyes.

Forcing a nod she cleared her throat. "It's only a trinket from another life." she whispered the pain obvious in her voice.

"Well it is a beauty. I'll give you a good price for it." He said and then began to count out bills that Lily took feeling as if she had just sold part of her soul.

By the time she returned back to the hotel room she exhausted both physically and mentally. She had thought about leaving that night but they would have to stay another night.

She opened the door to find both kids awake and listening to Petunia telling them stories and she smiled to see her older sister actually looking content holding her very magical son.

Petunia looked up from the kids and looked at her before standing up and giving Lily a hug.

"Have something to eat" Petunia said as she pointed at the pizza box on the small side table. "Brush your teeth and then go to bed. I'll take care of the kids tonight. Every things going to be okay." Petunia whispered the last part into her ear.

Nodding her approval at the plan she ate a piece of pizza running her free hand up and down Sam's back. While she ate she listened to the stories that Petunia told and smiled as she remembered the easier days of her life. She fell asleep to the sound of her sisters voice.

She woke early in the morning to the feeling of to warm bodies pressed into her side. Opening her eyes she looked out the window and so the first bit of sunlit beginning to show. It was time to start the next chapter of there lives.

"Come on loves it's time to wake up" She whispered into Harry's ear first causing him bury his head further into side. Smiling softly she moved her hand threw his hair.

"Samantha up you get." She whispered which had the little girl turn away from her and moan.

"They look like there just as easy to get up as you were" Petunia called out softly from the corner she had obviously slept in.

"Yeah, real morning people." She answered trying to sound happy.

Once the kids were washed and dressed in clothes that Petunia had taken them out to get yesterday Lily checked out of the hotel and stood in front of her sister with Harry and Samantha to her side.

Petunia knelt down and gave each kid a hug and then stood up and faced Lily again. Hugging each other hard Lily once again held back tears. She felt emotionally drained.

"Thank you for everything Pet. I don't know what I would have done without you." She whispered into Petunia's ear.

"You would have been fine. I don't know anyone that is stronger then you Lily. And you are going to get by fine. If you ever need me I'm only phone call away." Petunia whispered into her ear. Although both sister's knew there wouldn't be another phone call.

Pulling back from the hug Petunia reached into her purse and pulled out a picture and handed it to Lily.

"This is your nephew Dudley. It's a little old but it's the only one I have on me." Petunia said as she smiled down at the picture in Lily's hands. "He's going know all about his wild aunt Lily." She continued.

Smiling Lily looked down at the picture of a chubby five year old ;of a child that she doubted she would ever see in person.

"He's beautiful Pet. He has dad's smile." She said as she studied the boy looking up after a few moments to see Petunia smile with pride at that.



"Smart as whip to. I know you'll take care of the kids but you make sure you take care of yourself as well Lily." Petunia said once again hugging her.

"I will, back at you. You know I love you right?" Lily whispered not wanting to let go of her sister but knowing she had to.

"I know. I love you to." Petunia said as she pulled away from her and started towards the underground.

Hearing a rather loud pop Petunia turned around again to where her sister had been standing only to see a flash of fire out of the corner of her eye and no sign of Lily and the kids at all. Gasping slightly at display of magic that had happened so close to her.

Petunia closed her eyes and said a prayer for Lily and the children then continued to the underground. She had a couple hours to make up a believable excuse for being away for so long for Vernon. It wouldn't be until a week later when she was cleaning out her purse she would find the broach and a note hidden at the bottom.

Pet,

Thank you again for everything. I love you and always will.

I don't know about mama but I want you to keep this.

Your sister

Lily

CHP17